

Aspects of Eighteenth Century Advertising in Britain-

London Trade Cards 1660-1770

by

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ABSTRACT

This study, the first of its kind, traces the development of trade card advertising in Britain (though most examples are from London) from its beginnings around 1660 to the end of the mid- period designated by the author to end c. 1780. Against a backdrop of pertinent cultural stimuli, and a full description of trade card production and use, it describes the increasing sophistication of this form of advertising as an indication of the rapid development of increased competition within the durable consumer goods market from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. The trade card collections of the British Museum, the Guildhall Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Pepys Collection (Magdalene College, Cambridge) have provided the basis of the research.

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Acknowledgment and Dedication

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Finally, to my husband, Piet: Over the past five years since I began work on my masters I have prided myself on being, like Kali, many-armed in my abilities to manage house, children, teaching, and this study. In reality, of course, he was behind me all the time, and all those extra arms were actually his.

This work is dedicated to my late father, John Smedley, whom I loved deeply and sorrowfully miss. I hope it makes him proud.

Frontispiece	Trade card of William Guest, Asses Milk Seller
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ASSES MILK TO BE SOLD.
Also Goats Milk.
 Likewise Asses Bought & Sold, or Lett
 to Milk, in Town or Country, where Gentlemen
 & Ladies, may be serv'd in the best manner,
 at their own Houses, any hour in the Day,
 at a very Reasonable Rate
 By **WILLIAM GUEST,**
 at the Sign of the *Up & Foal,*
 in North Duke Street, facing
 Grosvenor Square.

Frontispiece

Introduction

Trade cards are an early form of advertising, to begin with. Many of them are also wonderful works of art. They are certainly the most informative source left to us of seventeenth and eighteenth century advertising for consumer durables. Much has been written on newspaper advertising for the same period, but that medium, prolific though it was, has little to do with consumer durables. Trade cards not only illustrate goods for sale, but they illuminate attitudes toward luxury, ownership, fashion, taste, and personal virtue on the part of both tradesmen and consumer alike. Tracing the increased sophistication of this form of advertising, which this work sets out to do, sheds new and vital light on the growth of the consumer market before that period marked in the classic teleology by the term 'industrial revolution', which is usually considered the spark which set off the advertising blaze of the nineteenth century. An increased emphasis on this market development has exercised the minds of many historians over the past few decades; this study is but one of the stepping stones which will bridge the huge gap which, a few generations ago, historians constructed between pre-industrial and industrial society. There is no gap. There was no consumer revolution. There is, as many have surmised before me, merely a steady evolution, and trade cards illustrate this most succinctly.

When studied carefully against a backdrop of the society for which it was created, advertising is a powerful voice for the fascinations of a period. Its effective beginning in England occurs near the middle of the seventeenth century and it reaches lofty heights of sophistication by the middle of the eighteenth. The growth of advertising during this period deserves careful consideration, if only to silence

those who believe that effective advertising methods belong to the nineteenth century. Long silent, trade cards have a clear voice once again.

Very little literature exists on the subject. Sir Ambrose Heal, whose collection now lodged at the British Museum forms a focus for this study, wrote a book and several articles about trade cards, but they are for the most part studied for their anachronisms as quaint reminders of a golden age long gone. Heal wrote with undisguised sentimentality in a period still aching from the Great War and on the tortured brink of another. Since then several authors have examined various strata of trade cards from specialist angles: Michael Snodin from the point of view of the designer of mid-period cards; M.A. Crawforth on scientific instruments as evinced in trade cards; and most recently, Julie-Anne Lambert of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, who examined the John Johnson Collection of trade cards (etc.) as part of a larger exhibition of trade ephemera. Each work is a stepping stone, though this is the first to use trade cards in an attempt to build a greater understanding of the development of the eighteenth century consumer mentality (or at least that of a good proportion of its middle and gentry class.) It is merely the next step, not the last.

Although trade cards were produced throughout England, and on the continent as well, this survey will limit itself (with only a few exceptions) to cards produced in London for London tradesmen.¹ As the centre of design, industry, and shopping through the middle of the period, London received foreign influences first, and with its ever-present population of both foreign and native artists, was

¹ This may sound too specific, but there are many instances of London engraver/designers producing cards for tradesmen in other cities, sometimes at some remove from the metropolis. Yes, there were engraver designers in most large cities from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, but I believe it shows the prowess which London engravers were thought to possess in the field which attracted the attention of tradesmen in other urban centres. It is also possible that London designer/engravers charged less for their work.

best able to interpret these changes for the larger market. Adaptations to fashion and taste eventually made their way onto the wider national market, and as the century progressed design changes imitating those in London appeared more and more quickly in the provinces.

Part of the task before me was to provide some criteria for the dating of trade cards. This was a by-product of the initial determination to trace the development of the medium. The reader will find as much detail on the subject as I have been able to muster, most particularly in chapter two, which is devoted to a discussion of the production and distribution of trade cards. There are probably more provisos than hard and fast rules, and I can do no more than reiterate the warnings given by several writers before me: without a hand-written, contemporary date on the card, it is virtually impossible to date it precisely. Too many variables exist. It is certainly possible to date a card stylistically to the period most likely for its *production* but it may have continued in use far beyond the point at which it was 'cutting-edge' fashion. Still, enough of a frame-work exists to construct a stable edifice of development, and within this frame-work, dating is usually possible to within approximately twenty years. It is my hope that in attempting to determine the age of a trade card, the reader will learn much more about the society for which the card was produced.

The methodology of approach is quite simple: chapter one describes the various forms of advertising which were available in addition to trade cards from the middle of the seventeenth century through the middle of the eighteenth; chapter two describes the production and distribution of trade cards; chapters three and four each begin with an examination (in some detail) of the contemporary mores

through which trade card advertising was shaped, and also an economic synopsis, after which they go on to a close study the trade cards of the early and middle periods respectively.

I hope that this study will provide a little more colour in the tapestry of consumerism through the early modern period. As much as anything else, its aim is to dispel the myth that advertising began in the nineteenth century as a response to an industrial revolution. The degree of sophistication in approach, especially in the later stages of trade card use (c.1770), is astonishing even in comparison to the sort of emotional manipulation which now appears daily in newspapers and journals throughout the developed world. Such sophisticated advertising methods did not begin overnight. The maturation in approach of trade card advertising which this study seeks to trace bespeaks a development in answer to a consumer society which is already well-developed by the mid-eighteenth century. Thus the consumer revolution once touted to mark the late eighteenth century becomes merely a logical development of a movement with threads which stretch further into the past than once thought.

The shopkeeper of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century did not suddenly fall upon the idea of advertising. Various methods of publicizing goods for sale had been used in the western world since the ancient Greeks and Romans. The purpose of this chapter is to sketch a quick history of advertising methods and then to lay out the many forms of advertising which were available to traders from the mid-seventeenth century so as to provide a backdrop to the study of that particular variety of advertising---trade cards---which forms the focus of this study.

Many of the forms of advertising available to eighteenth century traders had been in use for centuries. Criers and symbol boards were known in ancient Greece¹, and in addition to these, the Romans used a type of billboard known as *libelli* which advertised both products and prices. Some were painted onto walls, while others were embedded. Less permanent would have been those which were merely written on tablets and fixed to pillars, although Frank Presbrey suggests that even advertising painted on walls was temporary in that those in prominent places would be white-washed over once the contracted advertising period had ended.² Many seem to have used signs and symbols to get their message across, reflecting, as

¹ I am driven by an intimate knowledge of modern cosmetic advertising to quote a cry credited to Aesclyptöe:

For eyes that are shining, for cheeks like the dawn,
For beauty that lasts after girlhood is gone,
For prices in reason the woman who knows,
Will buy her cosmetics of Aesclyptöe.

This is quoted in T.R. Nevett's Advertising in Britain: A History (Heinemann: London, 1982) p. 3, which he quotes from J.P. Wood's The Story of Advertising (New York, 1958) p. 18.

² Frank Presbrey, The History and Development of Advertising (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 8.

Henry Sampson notes, the limited literacy of the populace.³ Presbrey dates the first tentative attempts at persuasive, rather than merely informative *print* advertising to later Roman culture, citing the announcements painted on the walls of the ruined cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii which included adjectives to describe products, rather than merely listing them.⁴

As the Roman Empire collapsed, much trade did as well. Diminished competition (amongst other catalysts) resulted in a reduced need for advertising. Only with the later Middle Ages do we find references to the sort of competitive trading which occasioned advertising, and then the result was that most ephemeral type of advertising, the street crier. Even most of these are recorded as staying within the environs of the shop in question; they did not range abroad in the town or city to make their announcements, as official town-criers did. Taverns seem to have been the most frequent advertisers, and the criers in Paris carried long horns to attract the attention of the citizenry, and often gave out samples from wooden buckets.⁵

Presbrey dates the modern beginning of print advertising in England to the end of the fifteenth century, when advertising bills were hand-written by scribes. These bills often began with the Latin *siquis*, or “if anybody” and advertised for servants wanted, lost articles and similar necessities. They were posted wherever a crowd could be sure to gather, such as the middle aisle of St. Paul’s. It would seem that few if any of these advertised goods were for sale. Nevett notes that the few

³ Henry Sampson, *A History of Advertising from the Earliest Times* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1874), 21.

⁴ Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising*, 6.

⁵ Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising*, 11.

early broadsides still in existence from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries publicise freak shows, lotteries and the like, not commodities.⁶

Criers continued to bellow their wares through the streets of London throughout the eighteenth century, however most of these were itinerant salesmen and women selling their own wares, rather than those crying the wares of others. Early in the century it was not uncommon to have an apprentice, or even the shopkeeper or his wife, sitting or standing by the entrance to the shop, calling out or otherwise beckoning the passers-by to take a closer look at the goods for sale. Dorothy Davis associates this form of advertising from the street with the later seventeenth century,⁷ and it certainly has much in common with the sort of selling which went on in the fashionable exchanges of the period, what Claire Walsh refers to as the shopping galleries of London. Scores of small shops were gathered together in these latterday malls, and so small were the individual outlets that there was scarce room in many for more than a single shopkeeper and his or her wares. These were often highly specialized and extremely expensive---things like laces, silk goods and fine linens. The shops were undifferentiated and in order to gain an advantage over the competition, a shopkeeper might, and frequently did, staff this tiny space with his comely wife or a young and attractive female relative. Edward Ward described the Royal Exchange in the late seventeenth century “where women sat in their pinfolds begging of custom with such amorous looks, and after so affable a manner, that I could not but fancy they had as much mind to dispose of

⁶T.R. Nevett. Advertising in Britain: A History (Heinemann: London, 1982), 7.

⁷Dorothy Davis, A History of Shopping (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1966), 102.

themselves as the commodities they dealt in.”⁸ Mention of such sales techniques disappears early in the eighteenth century. Indeed, Defoe devotes an entire chapter to the lengths some shopkeepers wives went to in order to distance themselves from the shop altogether.⁹ I suspect that by the mid-eighteenth century, in terms of street shops anyway, such an overt display of eagerness for sales was both frowned upon because it lacked the necessary restraint which was vital to a tasteful effect, and because with the increased availability of glass windows and greater lighting and display in shop interiors, such personal contact was no longer necessary: the shoppers could see for themselves what was on offer within.

Perhaps the single most vital form of exterior shop advertising was the sign hanging over the premises. Shop signs served two important functions: firstly, they identified the location of a business in a city which did not begin to use street numbering (in an organised fashion) until 1762; and secondly, the symbols they bore usually (but not always) identified the nature of the trade carried on within the premises. Heal’s book of sign boards lists a dizzying variety, few of which would be recognized now, but all of which would have been easily recognizable to those shoppers, literate or illiterate, who bustled along the shopping precincts of seventeenth and eighteenth century London. A third, and rather peripheral benefit to the shop sign would have been its decorative nature. Rather like the decorative attendants in the shops of the Royal Exchange, an attractive, well-painted, and large sign might well be counted on to attract the attention of pedestrians. Indeed, many

⁸ Quoted from “The London Spy” in Erin Mackie. ed. The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from the Tatler and The Spectator (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1998), 251.

⁹ Defoe, Daniel, The Complete English Tradesman in Familiar Letters, 2nd Edition, Vol. I (New York Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), 287.

noteworthy artists turned their hands to such commercial works; both Watteau and Hogarth are recorded as having painted shop signs, and no doubt other hallowed names of the artistic community did so as well in an effort to keep bread on the table. From the accession of Charles II, when he granted shopkeepers the right of display, shop signs became ever larger and more obtrusive. In narrow streets well-lined with shops, large signs overhanging and those stuck on posts in front of shops blocked the sunlight and the passage of fresh air, vying with each other in size and decoration for the attentions of potential customers. In 1718 an enormous sign suspended above a business in Bride Lane fell, bringing down with it the entire shop front and killing four passers-by.¹⁰ Regardless of that tragedy, and of the committee formed to see that it would not occur again, nothing was done to rid London of its shop signs until 1762, when the first parliamentary act enforcing the numbering of houses was promulgated.¹¹ Even then, the move toward numbering houses gained ground only fitfully; ten years later there were still parts of London unnumbered. The directories of London tradesmen which were increasingly popular from mid-century onwards reflect the slow adoption of street numbers even in the last decades of the century, as do trade cards. Both continued in some instances to give directions to, rather than exact locations, of shops and businesses. Certainly many trade cards continued to use shop signs in their designs until the last quarter of the century, if only in a very minor capacity, and often hedged their bets by including the street number, usually inserted,

¹⁰ I am indebted for this fact, and indeed, for much of the content of this section, to Ambrose Heal's Sign Boards of Old London Shops (London: Portman, 1988), 1-15.

¹¹ The signs were removed by the provisions of the Paving Acts: 6. Geo.III.c.21(1766); 6. Geo. III.c.24 (1766); 8. Geo.III.c.21(1768); et c.

sometimes rather incongruously, onto the old copper plate, as well as the traditional lengthy directions to the shop.

The problem with shop signs, as with the criers, was that they could do little to convince the prospective buyer of the novelty and taste of the shop itself. More problematic than this, there is compelling evidence to suggest that some shop signs made no recognizable reference to the goods sold within. Addison printed a letter in *The Spectator* from a writer clearly incensed at the lack of logic behind some shop signs. He would “enjoin every shop to make use of a sign which bears some Affinity to the Wares in which he deals...I have seen a Goat set up before the Door of a Perfumer...”¹² They also presupposed the presence of the prospective buyer in close proximity to the shop. As increasing numbers of shops with the same specialisation huddled in close quarters in the same areas of the city, some other form of advertising was necessary to differentiate them. Here, the shop front itself was of some assistance.

Daniel Defoe, writing in 1726, provides a most descriptive diatribe on the evils of shop display, which taken all-in-all, would suggest that a) such overt and, to his mind at least, needlessly expensive displays were common enough to require open censure and that b) many of the richer shops of London rewarded window-shoppers for their time mightily and temptingly. Scathing in his criticism though he remained throughout, Defoe stated in only the fourth paragraph of the chapter “It is true, that a fine show of goods will bring customers...”¹³ His advice was that

¹² “The Spectator”, No. 28, Apr. 2, 1711, in *The Spectator in Four Volumes*, ed. Gregory Smith, Vol. I (London: Dent and Sons, 1911), 102-103.

¹³ Daniel Defoe, Letter XIX, *The Complete English Tradesman*, 257.

such display was “something the times must be humoured in, because fashion and custom must be followed.....it is good to make a show, but not to be *all show*.¹⁴”, and later, “that a fine, painted, gilded shop, among the rest, has a great influence upon the people, draws customers, and brings trade...”¹⁵ All of which is enough to convince the reader that this was a potent form of advertising. Even the French, who Defoe blamed for the practice in the first place, were impressed by London shop fronts. A visitor in 1728 remarked that the shops were surrounded by glass finer and clearer than that of France “which keeps the dust off, while still displaying the goods to passers-by, presenting a fine sight from every direction.”¹⁶ The sash windows Defoe mentions were soon augmented by bow windows, which took advantage of the additional light and space created to highlight more of the wonders which could be found within. Shop exteriors were given distinctive architectural details and colouring to mark their boundaries and identify them as shops.¹⁷ Their interiors were treated with similar care. Claire Walsh notes that the fashionable interiors of many shops were meant to echo those of the fashionable

¹⁴ Daniel Defoe, The Complete English Tradesman, 258. He blames the French who are “eminent for making a fine outside, when perhaps within they want necessaries...”

¹⁵ Daniel Defoe, The Complete English Tradesman, 184.

¹⁶ Quoted in Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping, 222. This emphasis on display is important in that it was a reflection of the shopping practices of earlier generations, when most goods would have been sold at an open market stall where they were open to examination (and the elements, and theft!) and had temptation value. Eighteenth century shops improved on the shopping experience by providing a more comfortable situation in which to actually deliberate, discuss and make purchases .

¹⁷ Claire Walsh, “Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London,” Journal of Design History Vol. 8 No.3 (1995), 160. As far as I know, Walsh continues to research in this area. This article continues to be the sole reliable reference on the subject, and the one to which most researchers in the area of marketing and display refer.

homes from which these shopkeepers wished to draw their clientele: “They were designed to attract the right level of customer and to retain their custom, which they could do only if they could keep up with fashion and with competition from other shops.” Once deemed fashionable, and thus attracting a noteworthy clientele, the shop became, like the theatre, the right place to be seen and from which to purchase¹⁸. Even the goods for sale within the shop were themselves considered forms of advertising, if one considers that it was the shopkeeper as much as his stock which were being advertised.¹⁹ Again, this was a problematic form of advertising in that its use was limited to shopkeepers who had a large-enough turnover of goods (for instance, china sellers) or who sold the type of luxury goods (such as goldsmiths) upon which a high enough mark-up would be possible, as to allow the constant outlay necessary for a shop to look truly fashionable. Smaller shops could not afford such expenditures.

Given the number and regularity of the London newspaper presses output, even early in the eighteenth century, it is surprising that so few traders took advantage of this medium in which to advertise themselves and their goods. There is ample proof, however, that traders in commodities other than books, and quack medicines, and those who offered services, very rarely used newspapers to

¹⁸ Walsh, “Shop Design”, 161.

¹⁹ As will be discussed at length in chapter four, advertising by mid-period was focused as much upon the character and knowledge of the shopkeeper as upon the breadth or fashionability of his stock.

advertise.²⁰ This is odd, in that there was so much to recommend the medium. Most of the more respectable London newspapers were written for precisely that economic group to which better shopkeepers looked for consumers: the upper and middle ranks.²¹ Some papers were delivered gratis to homes. Subscriptions were available, and many titles were hawked on street corners, or sold by specified outlets. Many of the coffee houses to which this group had resort subscribed to, or were given gratis, the more popular papers, and there are records of these papers being read aloud, advertisements and all, to the fury of many of the coffeehouse owners who ended up serving free advertising with their coffee and chocolate.²² Several of the coffeehouse men complained, as well they might; by 1750 as much as seventy-five percent of some London dailies were advertisements alone.²³ Jeremy Black reports that the number of advertisements increased during the century “at a

²⁰ This opinion has been stated by many authors on the topic, among them: R.B.Walker “Advertising in London Newspapers, 1650-1750,” Business History XV, No. 2 (1973), 112-30; Jeremy Black, The English Press in the Eighteenth Century (London: Croome Helm, 1987), 298; T.R. Nevett, Advertising in Britain: A History (London: Heinemann, 1982), 20; Claire Walsh “The Advertising and Marketing of Consumer Goods in Eighteenth Century London,” in Advertising and the European City: Historical Perspectives, ed. Clement Wischermann and Elliott Shore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 80.

²¹ This had been so since the late seventeenth century; see James Sutherland, The Restoration Newspaper and its Development (Cambridge: U.P., 1986), 82; and continued well into the eighteenth, see Michael Harris, London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole: A Study in the Origins of the Modern English Press (Cranberry N.J.: Assoc. Univ. Presses, Inc, 1987) 165.

²² E.S. Turner records the publication of a pamphlet by a group of coffee house keepers in 1728 complaining that they do the newspapers’ advertising for them and get paid nothing for the work, inasmuch as “the papers are often half full of them....They are paid on both hands - paid by advertisers for taking in Advertisements and paid by the coffee men for delivering them out...” E.S. Turner, The Shocking History of Advertising (London: Michael Joseph, 1952), 28.

²³ R.B. Walker, “Advertising in London Newspapers, 1650-1750,” Business History Vol. XV No.@ (1973): 112.

rate that probably exceeded the growth in readership.”²⁴ Several prominent London newspapers even included the word ‘advertiser’ in their title, presumably as a draw to potential readers and advertisers alike.²⁵ Such a ploy is hardly surprising inasmuch as most, if not all newspapers relied on income from advertisements rather than sales to enable them to survive or flourish.²⁶ In order to further encourage potential advertisers many authors were at pains to ensure that their readers were aware of the broad distribution of the newspaper. The author of *The British Mercury* assured his readers that their advertisements would be seen, “its spreading so far, there being nearly four thousand printed every Time, and those carefully distributed into all Parts, not only of the City, but of the Whole Nation.”²⁷ Newspapers and their advertisements were further spread abroad by being posted. The publisher of *The Daily Advertiser* printed the following message at the bottom of his paper: “the Advertisements only are pasted up in all the several Public Parts of the Town, in order to render them the more Notorious and Known, which is look’d upon to Answer the Chief End and Design of an Advertisement.”²⁸

By the mid-eighteenth century a daily paper might be expected to publish around one hundred advertisements, according to R.B. Walker. His breakdown of

²⁴ Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 22.

²⁵ *The Generous Advertiser, or Weekly Information of Trade and Business* (from 1707); *The Daily Advertiser* (from 1731); *The London Advertiser and Literary Gazette* (from 1731); *The General Advertiser* (from 1744---this was the newspaper’s third name change)

²⁶ Michael Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole: A Study in the Origins of the Modern English Press*. (Cranberry N.J.: Assoc. Univ. Presses, Inc., 1987) 36.

²⁷ Michael Harris, *London Newspapers*, 35, quoting *The British Mercury*, B.C.502. Saturday, 12 February, 1715.

²⁸ *The Daily Advertiser*, Friday, July 2, 1731. Burney Collection, British Library.

advertisers mirrors that given by many similar studies. Using twenty-four issues of *The General Advertiser* from early 1749 as my example (Walker compares three disparate titles) the advertisements are broken into the following classifications: books (525); auction (318); theatre (127); goods for sale (118); miscellaneous (116); medical (112); real estate (20); lost or stolen (10); runaways (5).²⁹ Given this paper's focus on the advertising of commodities, Walker's analysis of the 'goods for sale' criterion is useful. He notes that, while there is a broad spectrum of goods on offer---everything from mangoes to milled lead, and tea to trefoil seed---very few are advertised on a regular basis³⁰. Common goods were simply not advertised, and luxury goods, such as tea and coffee, were advertised only as long as they remained rarities, which ceased to be the case by the mid-eighteenth century. It must also be noted that many of those listed in the category of goods for sale are actually notices of the opening of a shop, or perhaps the shopkeeper's removal to another address.³¹

If newspapers and their ubiquitous advertisements were spread so far

²⁹ Walker "Advertising in London Newspapers", 123.

³⁰ "Walker concluded that most goods were never or only rarely advertised and that even luxuries were advertised irregularly after they ceased to be novelty. Looney found that most goods and services were not advertised and that advertising in the provincial press by London tradesmen outside of the medical and print trades was comparatively rare for most of the country." Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 298.

³¹ My own random search of *The Daily Advertiser*, *The Champion or Evening Advertiser*, *The London Advertiser and Literary Gazette*, and *The Public Advertiser* from 1731 through 1791 has borne this out, and is supported by the work of Claire Walsh, as evinced in "Advertising and Marketing in Eighteenth Century London" *op cit*.

abroad, if there existed a newspaper for virtually every budget but the very poorest³² then why did newspapers fail to attract commodity advertising? Part of the problem might have lain in the cost of such advertisements. Thanks in the main to a stamp tax of one shilling which had been imposed in 1712, the price of an advertisement of moderate length (about 2 inches) was somewhere around two shillings.³³ The rate dropped for multiple insertions, and many regular advertisers were given credit. Nevett records that the price had risen to six shillings for the same size immediately before 1833, an inflation due, again, mainly to a steady increase in the stamp rate. After this point the stamp duty was reduced and the subsequent advertising rate dropped to five shillings.³⁴ In comparison, a tradesman's verse of c.1788 in the British Library states that a run of one thousand "shop bills" (the eighteenth-century name for trade cards) could be printed for three shillings, six pence³⁵, although in all fairness it should be pointed out that printing was merely one of several expenses which would have been incurred in the production of a trade card. It could be argued that the average run of a well-

³² Michael Harris, London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole: A Study in the Origins of the Modern English Press (Cranbury New Jersey: Assoc. Univ. Presses, Inc. 1987) 29. Prices ranged from free to half a penny or a farthing.

³³ Elliott, A History of English Advertising, 97.

³⁴ Nevett, Advertising in Britain, 49.

³⁵ Julie Anne Lambert, A Nation of Shopkeepers: Trade Ephemera from 1654 to the 1860's in the John Johnson Collection. An Exhibition in the Bodleian Library, Autumn 2001 (Oxford: Bodleian, 2001), 43.

regarded newspaper would easily surpass that number on a single day.³⁶ While this is true, and while I have already presented evidence that advertising was certainly read, by mid-century two important problems had arisen with newspaper advertising: the polemical and often crude advertisements placed by quack medicine manufacturers had disgusted many readers and so coloured, or discoloured, their acceptance of newspaper advertising. This is not to say that advertisers of other commodities sank to the same level as the advertisers of the lauded anodyne necklace.³⁷ As Gillian Dyer points out, most advertisements were straightforward and informative, couched in “formal, respectful and ceremonious” language³⁸, but contemporary literature treated overt forms of advertising with disdain,³⁹ and the dearth of commodity advertising in eighteenth century newspapers would seem to suggest that many shopkeepers listened. The second problem was that the very popularity of newspaper advertising for books, auctions, services and the like resulted in a crush of advertising on the page. Attempts at differentiating advertisements by using capitals, pointing fingers, two-line initial

³⁶ G.A. Cranfield, The Development of the Provincial Newspaper (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), 258.

“Circulation had risen steadily, until the more powerful country newspapers could claim a weekly sale of 2000 or more copies: and a newspaper’s influence was out of all proportion to its actual sales since it was generally agreed that every copy was read by anything up to 20 people.”

³⁷ Surely one of the earliest examples of emotional blackmail in advertising, as well as the earliest examples of trademark advertising, one advertisement asked mothers how they would feel if their child died from teething, simply for want of the invaluable protection of the anodyne necklace. A facsimile of an advertisement dated July 22, 1731 can be found in Frank Presbey, The History and Development of Advertising (New York, Greenwood Press Publishers, 1968), 69. See also Francis Doherty, A Study in Eighteenth century Advertising Methods: The Anodyne Necklace, Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

³⁸ Gillian Dyer. Advertising as Communication (London: Routledge, 1982), 22.

³⁹ Hoh-cheung and Lorna H. Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England(Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 225.

letters, all-capped first word, long-dash paragraph mark and triple asterisk marks did little to alleviate the tedious sameness of columns and whole pages of advertisements. There were simply too many to read, and one man's attempt at informing the public of his shop and goods was lost in a mass of other shopkeepers, quacks and booksellers with the same end in view.⁴⁰ In short, the promotion of taste and individuality served by other forms of advertising such as shop signs and store front display were likely much more successful, at least in terms of those selling household goods and luxury commodities.

Of the other forms of advertising available, bill-posting has been singled out by Nevett as likely the most popular form of eighteenth century advertising.⁴¹ He provides no documentation for this opinion, and quite rightly points out that "few examples have survived."⁴² Both points are open to debate. Firstly, if posting bills was popular, the bills themselves were probably the same sort of trade cards which were produced by commodity advertisers during the period: the Heal and Banks collections in the British Museum contain many examples of exhibition and auction notices which could easily have been posted. I am doubtful, however, that Nevett's opinion will hold much academic water when it comes to commodity advertising. Although wandering around the shops and promenading in public were certainly acceptable forms of recreation throughout the eighteenth century, and while it is obvious that consumers spent some time admiring shop windows, the likelihood

⁴⁰ "Whatever is common is despised. Advertisements are now so numerous that they are very negligently perused...." Written by Samuel Johnson in a 1759 issue of The Idler, and quoted in Presbrey, The History and Development of Advertising, 70.

⁴¹ Nevett, Advertising in Britain, 20.

⁴² Nevett, Advertising in Britain, 20.

that elegant ladies and gentlemen would stop in front of hoardings or lamp posts in order to read posted bills is slim. Such persons would have had their notice of plays, exhibitions, auctions and the like through newspaper advertising. Many of those targeted by commodity advertising during the period went to and from the shops either in sedan chair or by carriage, and while congestion often made progress along the streets of London's popular shopping areas painfully slow, I doubt that most bills, even large and expensive ones, would have been easily read in passing by the naked, bounced and jostled eye. Only the lower ranks, on their way to and from the tavern or the coffee house, or playing truant from work, would have taken the time to peruse the bills posted, and they were not the sort of consumer upon whom most commodity advertisers were willing to spend funds for advertising. In keeping, too, with the point made earlier, I feel strongly that posted bills would have been judged by many careful shopkeepers as being too overt a form of advertising.

Such a criticism cannot be leveled against puffing, which was, perhaps, the most discreet form of advertising available to an eighteenth century shopkeeper. Puffing consisted of the insertion, often by payment to the newspaper or periodical in question, of what would commonly be called now "editorial content".⁴³ In short, a puff was an advertisement dressed as news. Many amusing examples dot the pages of *The Spectator*. There are seventeen essays on the subject of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, for example, which Addison's friend and publisher, Jacob Tonson

⁴³ Precisely the same practice still exists, but with a twist. When first engaged by a local arts group to take over their advertising, I was told that the group would be virtually guaranteed "editorial content" (i.e. extra advertising dressed as an informative article) if they spent a significant amount of cash on a proper ad.

had coincidentally (perhaps) just published in a pocket edition.⁴⁴ There are many references to Charles Lillie, a perfumer of great importance in the period in London, who also regularly advertised in “The Spectator”.⁴⁵ Most amusing of all, perhaps, is Addison’s abrupt *volte face* on the subject of opera. Having gone to some lengths in a number of essays to condemn the art form,⁴⁶ he then altered his key and tempo to sing the praises of the popular tenor, Niccolini, who (hardly coincidentally) had chosen the pages of *The Spectator* in which to advertise his imminent retirement.⁴⁷ Puffing was prevalent in many newspapers and periodicals from this point onwards. As Walker points out, puffs had the fiscal advantage of being advertising (and charged as such, he notes) without attracting any tax, with the added benefit of advertising to readers who normally avoided reading advertisements⁴⁸!

A more sophisticated method of puffing altogether, was to allow the consumers, themselves, to do the advertising. Although such a logical approach to marketing must have been used well before his time, Josiah Wedgwood expressed the spirit behind the ploy best when he commented to his partner, Richard Bentley, in 1779 that “it is plain from a thousand instances if you have a favourite child

⁴⁴ Mackie, *Market à la Mode*, 261.

⁴⁵ Number 358 (Monday April 21, 1712) begins with a long and fulsome description of Mr. Lillie’s elegance of education and taste, especially in matters of “Antiquity”, a subject of deep import to the fashionable buying public. He had happened in to visit Mr. Bickerstaff and had presented him with a piece of paper painted to look like a mosaic pavement.

⁴⁶ See, for example, *The Spectator*, Number 18, Wednesday, March 21, 1711.

⁴⁷ Lawrence Lewis, *The Advertisements of The Spectator* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), 124.

⁴⁸ Walker, “Advertising in London Newspapers”, 129.

you wish the public to fondle and take notice of, you have only to make choice of proper sponcers.”⁴⁹ Never backward in coming forward, as the expression goes, Wedgwood started at the top, with Queen Charlotte, with whose approbation he named his superior variety of creamware “Queensware”, and the ‘world’ could not get enough of it. Doubtless, those shopkeepers who boasted openly or discreetly to other customers of their close association with members of the aristocracy (and especially of the royal family) did a certain amount of trade by dint of this association alone, without having to resort to trumpeting the bond in print, trusting that their customers would spread the word of the shop’s aristocratic ties. The mere fact that many tradesmen *did* trumpet their aristocratic clientele in print (usually trade cards) suggests, however, that advertising by association might have proven fruitful, but could hardly be depended on in the long term.⁵⁰

The chronology of advertising forms which this chapter has sketched in order of their appearance in English markets suggests that an eighteenth century trader keen to attract customers, advance his turnover and protect his credit had a range of choices. These can be ranked by their order of importance to the sale of the goods involved. From this perspective there appear to me to be three levels of

⁴⁹ Quoted in N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, eds. The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982),100.

⁵⁰Two areas of advertising lie beyond the ken of this work, and they are pattern books and agents. Inasmuch as both means of promotion were used mainly by those traders who were wholesale suppliers to smaller traders, they were not major means of appealing directly to the consumer, which I consider all the other forms of advertising previously listed. The obvious exception to this statement are books such as Thomas Chippendale’s The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker’s Director, which as the name suggests, was meant to be read by those outside the trade, and was doubtless used as a means of advertising the superior tastes of the cabinet-maker. The three editions of this work were typical of a number of pattern books published by, and for, furniture manufacturers and designers (and were very useful for the designers of trade cards, as will be seen) throughout the eighteenth century, but were, I feel, of very limited use in retail advertising.

approach, which for ease I have named the primary, secondary, and tertiary. The primary level of approach is characterised by an appeal which actually brought the consumer *to* the shop. Examples during this period included trade cards, newspaper advertisements, puffing, and the commodities themselves as viewed in another home or setting. Word of mouth advertising can hardly be considered since this was, to a great extent, very much outside the control of the shopkeeper. I have labeled these forms of advertising 'primary' because no sales could take place without bodies in the shop, therefore any form of advertising which actually brought consumers to the shop was of primary importance. Secondary advertising is that which enticed the meandering consumer *into* the shop itself. Beneath this heading lay shop signs, shop front displays, any interiors visible from the street, and the assistant or apprentice who stood beside the door welcoming shoppers in, or shouting the details of what was for sale within. This form of advertising was useful to draw in window shoppers, but competition in the eighteenth century was such that many businesses were increasingly reluctant to depend on 'walk-in' custom alone. Finally, tertiary advertising is that which ultimately sold an object to the consumer already trapped within the shop. A polite manner, a deferential air, self-confidence and a knowledge of taste and usage, to say nothing of good prices, attractive goods, and the promise of generous credit terms were all necessary tools for the shopkeeper on this level of advertising. When all these levels of advertising worked in harmony, the result was money in the shopkeeper's pocket and an economy which barreled happily along, as it did in England throughout much of the eighteenth century. But competition for trade grew along with the economy, and increasingly, primary advertising was employed to draw greater

numbers of potential consumers to the door of the shop. For many shopkeepers, the most effective form of primary advertising was the trade card.

This chapter is a broad introduction to trade cards. Its purpose is not only to describe the objects in concrete terms, but to provide a detailed analysis of the many possible uses for them. Both must be clearly understood before any closer examination of the sophisticated stylistic development of trade cards themselves can take place.

Reluctant as I am to be the bearer of bad news, this chapter must begin with a stern warning to those who are hoping to find rock solid information on the uses of trade cards and frequency of their use. No data exists from which to draw firm, immutable conclusions on either subject. Much of this chapter will outline my own theories, and will draw on the opinions of those very few historians who have made the effort to unlock the secrets trade cards hold.

The sample upon which this and subsequent chapters are based numbers some nine hundred examples drawn from the collections of the British Museum (the Banks and Heal cards), the Guildhall Library, the John Johnson Collection (Bodleian Library, Oxford)¹, the Pepys Collection (Pepys Library in Magdalene College, Cambridge), and the small collection held by the Victoria and Albert Museum. Of that number, some two hundred and fifty have been noted only, while I possess roughly five hundred photocopies selected from the above collections, and was privileged to be allowed to photograph one hundred and seventy examples held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, and in the collection of the Guildhall Library. It is

¹ This collection is available on-line with access through the Bodleian website. Many of the trade cards have been photographed and are available for study together with all pertinent details. Credit for this remarkable work goes in the main to Julie-Anne Lambert whose perseverance and patience has created unprecedented access to this richly informative resource for students the world over. It remains the only on-line collection of its type in the world, and is an enormous boon to students of eighteenth and nineteenth century cultural history who might otherwise be unable to study such vital contemporary records.

from the latter two collections that most the illustrations for this work have been drawn.

Trade cards may well have proliferated in England from the late seventeenth century onwards because, unlike most other forms of advertising, they were used by the trader in a wealth of different ways. They served not only as notices of the shop's existence and location, but as invoices and labels as well, and these are only three of their major uses. In fact, I suspect that, given the prejudice in the upper trading echelons against any advertising *per se*, most traders would have referred to trade cards as a type of notification, rather than as a means of touting for business. Quite apart from a mere notification of business activity, however, trade cards often served the equally vital purpose of displaying taste and artistic sense. The extra expense of design and execution necessary for the production of a very fine and complex specimen indicated a tradesman's knowledgeable taste and appreciation for art, both characteristics which were of great import to the upper and middling ranks in eighteenth-century London, especially². Very few trade cards list commodities (although a number illustrate their wares), but rather focus attention on the traders themselves, their fashionability, their trustworthiness, their conservative natures, etc. This was a purpose to which few other forms of advertising could be put so concretely; to assure current or prospective consumers that their needs, physical and psychological, would be met. Words were useful in

² "The clockmaker William Lens (whose total fortune was valued at £138 in 1730) had 17 pictures and 46 prints in one principal room and 43 pictures in the other." Timothy Clayton, The English Print, 1688-1802 (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1997), 21. Nor would the household have been the only place where prints, many of them accomplished translations of recognized masterworks in oils, were broadly distributed; there is ample evidence to suggest that the walls of taverns and coffee houses also offered a hanging space for these decorative, though frequently inexpensive, works of art.

their way, but a picture is worth a thousand of them, and in a culture so long exposed to viewing great art in engraved form, from the popular print upwards, an attractive trade card provided an immediate and succinct form of communication³.

Broadly speaking, trade cards are notices on various grades and sizes of single sheet pages, either engraved, etched or letter press, stating the name of the trader, his trade, and his location (often with concise details as to location, especially in the days before street numbering). Engraved trade cards inevitably boast some illustration, even if that is limited to a somewhat naive rendering of the trader's shop sign. Letter press cards might bear a woodblock illustration, but most commonly (and most cheaply) give only the trader's name, location, and trade, surrounded by a border of what are known as printers' flowers.

The paper on which these cards are printed varied enormously in both size and quality over the period. The only sweeping generalisation one might be allowed is to say that large cards⁴ might be found during the first half of the eighteenth century, and that by the end of the century much smaller cards (about the size and weight of a modern business card) became popular⁵. Within those broad parameters, any number of different combinations of measurements might be found. The vast majority are vertical in design, rather than horizontal, and

³ Clayton, The English Print, 43, quotes Roger De Piles (author of the seminal text, The Art of Painting, 1706) enumerating the six good effects of prints, one of which was that they 'instruct in a more forcible manner than by Speech'.

⁴ I found several cards in various collections of approximately 8"x11", which is as unusually large size, but not unheard of for cards of very high quality.

⁵ Size was also dependent on the wealth of the trader, obviously. The Banks Collection contains some very large and highly decorative trade cards issued by chemists and makers of patent medicines. See especially those cards produced for Dr. James (by Kitchin), Dr. Lebeg and his Famous Worm-Powder, and Richard Siddall. This is not to say that wealthy traders did not produce small cards!

throughout much of the eighteenth century measured most commonly in the order of seven by five inches, a size akin, in fact, to the size of most inexpensive books. This is no coincidence, and results, I am sure, from the fact that most ephemera of this nature were printed as jobbing work undertaken by book printers in their quieter moments.

As to the quality of the paper stock: although the paper industry in England grew enormously between about 1680 and 1720⁶, much of the paper produced was utilitarian, as opposed to fine.⁷ Most English paper was used for wrapping goods, for wall-paper (an increasingly fashionable wall covering from the late seventeenth century onwards) and various other industrial purposes⁸. Much the largest supplier of the type of paper used in trade card production was Holland, and she may well have been merely re-exporting French papers. Ironically, France was an eager market for the tons of linen rags produced in England every year⁹, leaving English paper producers short. Using workmen far more skilled and carefully trained than England could boast for many decades, the French produced a variety of qualities of paper, including a fine, white paper which was preferred by many publishers of quality books in England. Only by the late 1750's was English output

⁶ Excise records suggest that there were at least 200 mills in existence in 1720. Many of these were very small, indeed, producing around eight reams in a day, although production was in many cases erratic. There are indications that in this industry, as in so many others, it was the influx of Huguenot craftsmen fleeing religious persecution in France which spurred the English industry.

⁷ D.C. Coleman, The British Paper Industry 1495-1860 (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), 99. Only fifteen percent of English paper was of sufficient quality to be used by the printing industry.

⁸ Paper and pressboard were crucial to the pressing process in the ever-burgeoning English cloth industry.

⁹ In English textile manufacture, wool predominated until cotton became cheap and popular toward the end of the seventeenth century. Neither could be used in the manufacture of paper.

reliable enough to provide the university presses with enough to negate the necessity of imports¹⁰. Indeed, Coleman estimates that with the increase in demand and availability of skilled labour the English industry grew by four times between 1720 and 1800¹¹.

Until 1757 all paper used in England was laid paper, the manufacturing of which involved laying the paper mash to dry over frames set with parallel wires. These parallel lines can still be seen easily by the naked eye when the paper is held up to a light source. Wove paper, that is paper which has been laid to dry on woven mesh, was first produced in 1757, and produced a much finer surface. Such fine paper would not have been used for commercial (i.e. advertising) purposes, but was used by the book presses almost exclusively. For all practical purposes, the paper used in the production of trade cards was laid paper, and lines will be more or less visible, depending on the weight (i.e. thickness) of the paper. These run in both directions, but the chain lines (those running top to bottom) will be more obvious, and in paper manufactured during the eighteenth century (or earlier) some deepening of colour will occur between the lines. Also visible, especially under magnification, will be hair-marks, left by the felt layers between which the sheets of paper were pressed. Most of the papers used for the production of trade cards would not have borne water marks.

Old paper, in this case that used for trade cards in the period under discussion, is necessarily coloured paper. The finest French papers---expensive and

¹⁰ The use of English papers by the university presses may be understood to be yet another indication of the growth of nationalism to the detriment of international (and especially French) imports in a wide variety of industries, engraving and design amongst the most important.

¹¹ Coleman, British Paper Industry, 89.

white--- were, again, used almost exclusively for the printing of fine books, whereas the lesser weights and qualities of paper would have sufficed for ephemeral types of printing such as trade cards, business stationery and the like. The raw materials for these had not been subjected to the same rigours of cleaning as those used for fine papers, and were therefore much less time-consuming and expensive to produce. Chlorine bleach, introduced in 1774, cheapened the removal of the yellow or brown colour so distinctive of eighteenth century papers but it was by no means common to all regions until closer to 1790.

From around the beginning of the nineteenth century, two processes were used to add a degree of further sophistication to trade cards; porcelain coating, which added a sheen to the surface of the card, and embossing. As both of these developments occur outside the period of discussion, neither will be investigated here.

It is tempting to use the history of paper-making to establish a dating process for trade cards and similar print ephemera. It would be a mistake to use paper alone to date print ephemera, however. Many printers kept stocks of old paper for decades before they were pulled into use; unused eighteenth century sheets of paper still come to light from time to time. Used as part of a complex dating formula, study of the paper on which trade cards are printed can certainly instruct, but my own research has taught me that the quality of the paper itself says much more about the impression the trader wished to leave with his clientele than about the date of the trade card¹².

¹² Collections such as those held by the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Guildhall Library are best for the study of the original cards, although these are mounted in plastic covers and must not be removed except with expert assistance. The collections held by the British Museum are offered on microfilm, which will give no indication whatsoever of the paper colour or quality. The individual cards may be inspected but only by prior arrangement, as they must be extracted from the holding vaults one by one and brought up to the Print Room by a staff already heavily over-worked.

Four printing processes were available to the artist for the production of both illustration and print¹³. To produce text, either the letter press was used or engraved calligraphic hand.¹⁴ To produce an illustration, the earliest method was by woodblock, soon augmented (certainly by the end of the seventeenth century) by the use of engraving and etching. The first prints produced in England were by woodblock, being those woodcuts illustrating William Caxton's *Mirror on the World*, in 1484. This is a method of relief printing (using raised lines, in other words) whereby knife and gouge are used by the cutter to slowly remove from the block the background of the design to produce the necessary image (in reverse) standing proud of the surface. Any areas which were required to be black, in other words, remained, while all those which are to be white were carved away. Closely grained woods such as pear or box were necessary to create crisp lines and to avoid the absorption of too much ink. Once the necessary detail had been produced, ink was dabbed onto the surface. At this point the paper could either be brought to the woodblock (the method used in Europe), or the block brought to the paper (the method used in China, where the method first appeared in the ninth century), and the whole pressed together to force the ink onto the absorbent surface of the paper. Once the printing press was invented, woodblock printing was an easily integrated tool for illustration, inasmuch as it used the same technology as the letter press.

¹³ My bible on this subject has been Bamber Gascoigne's *How To Identify Prints: a complete guide to manual and mechanical processes from woodcut to ink jet* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986).

The subject is far more complicated than I am able to credit here, and the student or collector would do well to study thoroughly the first half of this seminal work in order to learn how to distinguish one process from another.

¹⁴ Letterpress cards, that is, those produced by the compositor using type face and by means of the hand press, varied little over the time of this study and will consequently receive scant attention.

Both letter plate and woodblock could be held in the press together and text and image produced quickly and efficiently. While woodblock printing was quickly superseded at the end of the seventeenth century by engraving and etching, the earlier process did not disappear altogether. The ease with which text and picture could be printed at once recommended it to those traders who desired more economical trade cards. Added to this, woodblocks had greater longevity than copper plates, which by the nature of the medium, wore down quickly and had to be re-cut if detail and crispness were not to be lost.

The use of woodblock printing for the illustration of trade cards is often associated solely with the earliest period, which is a mistake. Certain trades, often the most practical, such as chimneysweeps, nightmen¹⁵, and carters used woodblock prints throughout the eighteenth century. It may be that they found the medium suitably inexpensive given their expected income, but they may also have bargained on this form of illustration being easily recognized by their clientele (rich and middling)¹⁶, in the same way that they rarely varied the type of illustration they used, preferring in most cases traditional icons to 'curious' fashionable display. This point being made, it is important to emphasize again that the student or collector cannot assume that the more naive the illustration the older it is likely to be.

¹⁵ Nightmen, who often worked as chimney sweeps as well, collected night soil from outhouses. Nasty as the job sounds, it engendered some pride in its adherents, who latterly advertised themselves as nightmen to the nobility, so proud were they of their calling.

¹⁶ I am postulating here that the clientele were the buyers themselves and not their servants. While I am sure the cook or housekeeper might be trusted to inspect, say, the quality of meat delivered from the butcher, I feel it is more likely that either the mistress or master of the house took delivery of, or at least inspected upon arrival, goods arriving from shops which dealt in expensive goods such as furniture, glass, silver, etc., in other words the sort of shop which would use trade cards.

By far the most common, and certainly the most significant process in terms of design, was engraving. This is one of the intaglio methods of print making, in other words, the image on the page is produced by lines which have been cut *into* a surface as opposed to the lines on a woodblock which stand proud of the surface. Engraving appeared in European prints around 1400, at first cut from wood blocks. Metal surfaces appeared around 1430, probably reflecting the popularity of cutting designs onto metal objects such as silverware, swords and armour. Engraving involves the use of a burin, a sharp steel cutting tool of lozenge section which has a wooden handle shaped to fit close and comfortably into the palm of the engraver's hand. By pushing the burin along the soft surface of a copper plate¹⁷, the engraver cuts into and removes thin sections of the metal. These sections might be thick or thin, and the resulting differences in thickness of line can be easily seen. Shading was also created using cross-hatching¹⁸. Consider when studying the illustrations in this work that in order to produce a curved line the engraver turned, not the copper plate upon which he engraved, but the leather pad or cushion upon which it rested, keeping his burin pushed into the worked surface as it rotated beneath the tool. Wherever the tool entered the surface a tapering line was created, as when the burin left the surface. While these could be corrected, such care was expensive and few trade cards warranted such extra concern. Finally, when the plate is rubbed over with ink, these lines retain it, releasing it to the absorbent surface of the paper when the pressure of a metal roller is applied.

Engraving rarely appears on its own in the eighteenth century, whether the

¹⁷ Steel plates did not become popular until the end of the eighteenth century.

¹⁸ As a reminder, in a woodblock print shading will appear uniformly black because the surface which created it was uncut and therefore completely covered in ink.

object in question be an art print or a trade card. Most often engraving was allied with the faster and cheaper technique of etching. Etching appears first near the beginning of the sixteenth century. In place of the burin, a corrosive liquid is used to remove material from the plate. The etcher covers the warm copper plate with a thin coating of acid-resistant material (wax in the eighteenth century). When the plate is cooled he uses a needle (round, most commonly, or an *échoppe*---an oval headed needle creating greater sophistication of line and similarity to engraving) to scratch away the surface of the resist where he wishes a line to appear. With the back of the plate coated in varnish, the plate can be dipped into an acid bath. Wherever the surface of the copper plate beneath has been exposed by the needle, the acid will eat into it, creating lines to catch ink. The longer the plate sits in the acid, the deeper and broader the lines which are created, and hence the darker and thicker these lines will appear in the final work. The etcher can return again and again to the work, masking sections or lines which are deep enough (known as stopping out) , and exposing those which need to be deeper to yet another acid bath. The inking and printing process remains the same as that used for engraving. The resulting printed lines will appear (readily under magnification) to be blunt-ended, as opposed to the taper-ending which results from burin work. The benefit of the process is not simply that far more complicated (and curvilinear) lines can be created (since only the needle moves and not the entire work beneath a burin, as in engraving) but also that much detail can be etched in a fraction of the time necessary for engraved work. In trade cards, as in art prints, often the background work was achieved using etching, while the more crisp and fine details in the forefront were the work of an engraver. The work is often referred to simply as

an engraving, and the use of the etching process is never referred to¹⁹.

The final variety of intaglio printmaking, mezzotint, should arguably be left out of this study, in that it was rarely used for trade cards. In her exhibition catalogue, Julie-Anne Lambert notes that Heal recorded only one example (Henry Gyles, 1670), and she presents only one, that of C. Phillips, “Engraver in Mezzotinto”²⁰. The methodology of the process, invented in the mid-seventeenth century, involves minutely scoring a copper plate using a tool to create an overall pattern of dotted lines bitten into the copper. The mezzotinter then smooths all those surfaces which require *lighter* colouring using either a scraper or a burnisher, depending on the fineness of detail necessary. The more untouched the burred surface of the plate, the more ink that surface will absorb and the darker will be the finished paper surface. Final very fine details can be added either by etching or engraving. Such a printing method was wonderful when velvety effects were required, but this was seldom the case in ephemeral printing such as of trade cards. The process may also have carried a prejudice with it, as Lambert points out was the case with lithographic printing, in that it was often used as a quick and cheap process for inexpensive illustrations; “Trade cards, like bookplates, were prestigious productions and engraving was considered superior”²¹.

¹⁹ Gascoigne refers to the golden age of the etching as being from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. (How to Identify Prints, 10d) during which time remarkable effects were achieved through a number of sophistications regrettably outside the ken of this study. Also outside the parameters of this study are steel engraving and lithography; the first because its use was confined to fine art prints and the second because its popularity after 1820 puts it more or less outside the chronological boundaries for the work.

²⁰ Lambert, A Nation of Shopkeepers, Item 11, illustrated p. 8; described p.13.

²¹ Lambert, A Nation of Shopkeepers, 12.

Various Latin terms and abbreviations may be found at the bottom of some, but by no means all, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century trade cards. Those indicating that the name preceding it belonged to an engraver are: *incidit* (abbreviated to *inc.*); *sculpsit* (by far the most common); *caelivit*; and *fecit* (usually applied by etchers). *Invenit* indicates the name of the designer, and *delineavit* indicates that of the person who drew it. These latter two terms appear very rarely on trade cards, and then only upon the most expensive and superior sort. Their presence, then, signals the fact that the trader who employed both men (almost invariably) was intent on establishing the right tone with the quality of the work and its artists.

In his chapter entitled ‘Copper-Plate Engraver and Printer’ the mid-eighteenth-century author, Robert Campbell, details the work which would be required of any man taking up that trade. His descriptions are lengthy and informative, and suggest strongly that the engravers who worked on trade cards worked from their own designs. Campbell stresses that the future engraver be given an education which was “pretty liberal” and that they

ought to be acquainted with painting, have a nice Judgment in the Works of the most famous Artists, and perfectly Masters of the Doctrines of Light and Shade, in which their Art consists; They ought to be early learned to draw, and kept in constant Practice; for there is nothing which the Hand is more liable to forget than the Performance of any thing relating to Pictures.

On the subject of profit and wages he states that “The several Branches of Engraving are very profitable, and are reckoned among the genteel Trades.”²² Small wonder, then, that we are left with a fairly lengthy list of engravers who thought highly

²² R. Campbell, The London Tradesman (Originally published in 1747)(Newton Abbot, Devon: David and Charles (Publishers) Ltd., 1969), 113-114.

enough of their work that they left their names upon them²³.

The printing of trade cards was undertaken by printers under the heading of jobbing printing. This is a vast field, and by almost universal complaint, one which has gone abysmally unrecorded and under-researched. As Keith Maslen points out in his work on the Bowyer Press, it is more than likely that most printing houses undertook what is known as jobbing printing regardless of their status in the book or periodical trade²⁴. Even the Ackers Printing House, printers of *The London Magazine* and printers to the S.P.C.K. produced ephemera²⁵. Under this umbrella term shelter such dissimilar documents as playing cards and funeral tickets, government documents and IOU's, indentures and bills of lading. Indeed, as the serious business of making business grew in importance from the beginning of the eighteenth century, so too did the number of types of printed business documents. These were needed in order both to regularize business transactions and to keep careful record of transactions so as to avoid the possibility of bankruptcy. Luck and providence were still vital business partners in any endeavour, but as Margaret Hunt has illuminated in her study of the middling ranks, attempts to gain a greater understanding of and control over income and

²³ In an ideal world, this thesis would contain a chapter devoted solely to illuminating the lives and works of many of the better known eighteenth century engravers. Such a chapter is beyond the ken of this work, however, fascinating though it would be. It is important to note, however, that many eighteenth century engravers thought well enough of their work to leave their names upon their plates. Not only would this reflect common practise in the production of 'other' art prints, if you will, but would serve as a method of self-advertising---if you like the design, I can do one for you, too. Various examples of this can be found in chapter five.

²⁴ Maslen, Keith, *An Early London Printing House at Work: Studies in the Bowyer Ledgers* (New York: The Bibliographical Society of America, 1993), 49.

²⁵ D.F. McKenzie and J.C. Ross, *A Ledger of Charles Ackers, Printer of The London Magazine* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1968), 16.

expenditure in business also allowed the trader to enlarge his business when possible, and to trim back where expedient²⁶ .

The same printer who published works by the likes of Richardson and Johnson would most likely have undertaken the printing of trade cards and similar business stationery as a useful sideline when the press of business allowed, especially given the competitive climate within the burgeoning print industry. Indeed, Handover argues that it was just those booksellers and printers who spurred on the popularity of engraving in print ephemera: “The printers wanted to keep their rolling press at work after the engraved title-pages had been worked off: they had therefore to create work.”²⁷ Alas, most ephemeral printing went unrecorded within the printing houses²⁸ , and certainly the vast majority of the paper produced became mere scrap once its initial use had been concluded. It seems certain that these products were ephemeral enough in the printer’s estimation that he made no printed notation on the final copy to indicate where such works could be had in future.

The Bowyer Ledgers give some idea of the print runs for ephemera such as

²⁶ Margaret R. Hunt, The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 183. “As one moves on into the eighteenth century more ephemeral sorts of printed matter, generally quite specifically related to the day-to-day conduct of commerce, come into their own. Commercial ephemera included such items as printed rates of exchange, tax tables, model letters, dummy contracts, trade directories, appointment calendars, printed insurance policies, lottery tickets, newspaper advertisements, auction lists, charts of the prices of stock, sample catalogs, and business stationery.”

²⁷ P. M. Handover, Printing In London From 1476 to Modern Times; Competitive Practice and Technical Invention in the Trade of Book and Bible Printing Periodical production Jobbing Etc. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), 176. Lest the reader assume that trade cards were the only ephemera requiring engraving, it should be noted here that bank promisory notes, receipts, share certificates and theatre tickets were only a few of the printed forms which required the attentions of the engraver and the rolling press.

²⁸ McKenzie and Ross, A Ledger of Charles Ackers, 17.

trade cards:

The great range of commercial activity reflected in the ledgers may be illustrated merely by quoting a few entries. You may well imagine that these instances too would on further inquiry open vistas of eighteenth century life. Advertisement of a sale of timber by candle, 300 copies, charged 2s August 1724 to Sam. Billingsley; Bills for Bateman's Spirits of scurvy grass, 6000 copies....Shop bills for nets, fishing tackle, etc. 1,000 copies 1/8 sheet charged 6 August 1738 to Knight.²⁹

Both run length and cost for work by the printer William Bailey are included in a verse penned by him to advertise his own business:

As I do work at such a Price,
 'Twill suit the Frugal, or the Nice;
 SHOP-BILLS I have printed long since,
 At the rate of three and six-pence
 Per thousand;---or, as Size and Papers vary,
 Then a different Price they carry;³⁰

George Bickham, engraver and calligrapher, advertised "'Shopkeepers' Bills' with their proper decorations" in the *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* as early as February 1, 1739, while notice of "Bills at One Penny and Three-halfpence each, engraved with curious Borders suitable, a large Letter, and on good Paper..." appeared in his work *The Oeconomy of the Arts* of 1745.³¹ Lambert suggests that there was no difference in the costs of printing letterpress and engraved work. Handover would seem to disagree: "Newcomb found work because engraving was costly for short runs; many of the back-street tradesmen were content for him to

²⁹ Maslen, *An Early London Printing House at Work*, 151. Sale by candle was a type of auction in which the bidding closed when the candle burned down to a previously agreed level.

³⁰ Quoted in Lambert, *A Nation of Shopkeepers*, 43. The original card is in the British Museum.

³¹ Michael Snodin, "'Trade Cards and English Rococo,'" in *The Rococo in England: A Symposium*, ed. Charles Hind (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986), 82.

print off handbills that could be displayed in a shop or distributed in the street.”³²

Although the price of printing trade cards is sometimes noted on printers’ copies,³³ it is impossible to estimate the average cost to the trader. Much depended on the number to be printed, and abatements offered “for prompt payment, to correct a mistake in the original account, or as a way of settling a disputed charge.”³⁴

Four major styles held sway at different points through the period of trade card production (very roughly 1660-1830)³⁵: the baroque; the rococo; the neo-classical; and the romantic/patriotic. Both the Baroque and the Rococo styles lived longer in advertising than they did in the fine or applied arts. While the Rococo style is generally understood to have held sway in both those areas from roughly 1740 to 1760 in England, London designer/engravers flirted with the style somewhat earlier, and continued to use it in a modified manner well into the 1780’s, by which time it was all but dead in every other facet of the arts.³⁶

³² Handover, Printing in London, 180. Richard Newcomb’s crudely printed letterpress trade card is reproduced on the same page to indicate the contrast in quality between letterpress and engraved trade cards. “From what survives it would appear that during the eighteenth century there was letterpress jobbing for the poor man and engraved for the rich.” This would seem overly simplistic, since my own research has uncovered both types of card printed for the same trader. Whether each type of card served different purposes, or whether the letterpress card was produced at a low point in trade can only be guessed at.

³³ Lambert, A Nation of Shopkeepers, 43. She mentions that there are many such examples in the Bridgnorth Collection in the Bodleian Library.

³⁴ Maslen, An Early London Printing House at Work, 92.

³⁵ Only the first two will be subjected to close analysis in this work.

³⁶ I suspect that the reason the Rococo appears to last so much longer in trade card design is that it became progressively more symmetrical; the more exotic elements were dropped; and it retained the looping floral garlands which were very much a part of the neo-classical (which appears c. 1760), as well. In other words, it neatly straddled both styles.

Style was important to sales, but was used judiciously. A new fashion, like chinoiserie, might be used strongly throughout the card to suggest that the trader was *au fait* with the latest fashion, and could be trusted to supply his fashion-conscious clients with the same. A few traders were clearly in the vanguard of change; it would seem that others waited to see how widely the new style appealed. In some cases, I believe traders chose 'knock-off' designs remarkably similar to each other because the style had become synonymous with that trade through prior successful use. Style might be used more subtly. Several cards in the Heal collection featured the latest style in their decorative frames while illustrating within the body objects which were quite clearly *passé* in a fashion sense. Older styles still had their uses; while the fever of chinoiserie was inflaming the fashionable, incorporation of heavy Baroque ornament might have been used to suggest that the trader was well-anchored in the tried, true, and traditional styles of the past ("What was good enough for my father..."). Of course, the style of a trade card might remain the same through many re-prints over several decades simply because the trader realized that his clientele associated that design of trade card with his shop, and he was loathe to lose what we would now refer to as 'name recognition'. And for those concerned chiefly with spiralling business expenditures, it cost much less to renew an existing plate when another batch of trade cards was required, rather than to have another design produced altogether; text could be easily added or deleted, but changes to the illustration would have been more time-consuming and therefore more expensive. Style can be used to *broadly* date trade cards, then, when a secure date (of an invoice on the back, for instance) is lacking, and is sufficiently reliable to provide a strong foundation for

the increased sophistication of advertising approach which this thesis argues.

This leads to a consideration of which party instigated the design, shopkeeper or engraver/designer. It is not without the realms of possibility that a shopkeeper could himself, armed either with a pattern book, or even another tradesman's card, take the design to an engraver and give his directions for the adaptation of what he had before him. It is equally likely, and perhaps more so, that the engraver himself sketched a design for a prospective client. With vastly more pattern books available to him in his trade, and likely with strong ties to the artistic fraternity at large, an engraver would be in a strong position to identify to a shopkeeper the directions in which fashion was likely to lean. He would have produced a design which would then have been open to discussion and development as necessary. As a case in point, Ambrose Heal owned two cards issued by the Bristol Fire Office (insurance brokers). On what he supposed to be the earlier card he found the note "something more elegant". Heal supposed that the note was intended for the engraver and had been added by the stationer, who having taken a first pull of the plate and shown the result to the representative of the Office, found him dissatisfied. If the second, indeed, much more elegant card is anything to go by, the required improvements were carried out, presumably to the client's satisfaction.³⁷ Once the initial card had been produced, logic decrees that any further changes would be undertaken at the desire of the trader himself. New information, new details, perhaps even a new style would be undertaken once the initial order of cards had been completely distributed.

This chapter began with a promise to discuss the distribution of trade cards,

³⁷ British Museum, Heal Collection, 7.3. All of this information is contained in a footnote to the card.

and with such it will conclude. In common with much of the background to trade cards, much must be surmised; little hard and fast evidence for their many uses remains. The most obvious use for a trade card would simply have been to notify people in the area of a new shop (or an existing one which sought new custom), or a change in ownership (although such information was more likely to turn up briefly in newspaper advertising). Under those circumstances, trade cards would likely have been delivered as “ad mail” is now---by a person hired to either stand in front of the shop or on the street corner, or to deliver the handbills directly to homes in the area which the trader wished to target.³⁸ Mui and Mui state that “Just as manufacturers sent out pattern cards, the major shopkeepers of London and the larger provincial towns sent circulars to their customers.”³⁹ Whether these circulars were actually trade cards, or more in the nature of letters outlining new stock, etc. is unclear. That not all trade cards were used as invoices (see below) is obvious from the fact that so many of those still extant bear no indications of such usage. They must have arrived in the consumers’ hands either at their door, or, perhaps, delivered in a parcel from the same shop, or even picked up while standing outside, perusing the contents of the shop from the sidewalk outside. A letter written by Josiah Wedgwood to his partner, Bentley, informs him that Wedgwood has “banned the use of handbills from his showroom” saying that “We have hitherto appeared in a very different light to common shopkeepers.” Such commercial

³⁸ “Bills were handed out to passers-by in the street, either by sandwich-men, or by some specialist in the art....Bills could also be delivered direct to people’s houses. This method of operation was already well established by the 1820’s as is apparent from the Royal Blue book, a detailed guide which lists the occupant of every house, street by street; the nobility and gentry, with their town and country residences; and the principal types of business.” Nevett, Advertising in Britain, 59-60.

³⁹ Mui and Mui. Shops and Shopkeeping, 14.

arrogance might suit the likes of a trade giant like Wedgwood, but he had advertising options open to him which were not available to lesser mortals, most important, perhaps, his manipulation of his more aristocratic customers.⁴⁰ The competition in trade which Mui and Mui establish clearly through their work on shops and shopkeeping during this century underlines what must have been the keen necessity on the part of traders to assure consumer loyalty. Trade cards, regardless of how they were delivered to new or existing patrons, reminded them that the shop existed, and gave them an address in the clearest possible terms. Indeed, in many cases the address is laid out with such care (the ‘you can’t miss it’ school of direction giving) and appended so often with the name “London” that one suspects that these trade cards were sent into the provinces, perhaps in bundle form for hand-delivery, but more likely individually in packages of previously ordered goods, to be delivered to retailers by their wholesale suppliers, or to the long-distance customer himself.⁴¹ Again, such careful delineation of the address, especially in the early years of the eighteenth century, would insure that, rather than tackling the muddling lanes and confusing shopping areas of a crowded metropolis, the consumer would return, by order or in person, to this precise establishment the next time the same commodities were needed.

⁴⁰ Wedgwood’s marketing strategies are the stuff of advertising legend, and certainly put him in a class outside that of most eighteenth century shopkeepers. With the value of aristocratic favour in mind, he sent a shipment of his first successful batch of improved cream-coloured ware to the queen, who then allowed him to style himself ‘Potter to the Queen’, an association he noted both on his bills and on his shop signs. This is merely the most obvious of his many successful attempts to encourage the patronage of the very wealthy and influential. Hilary Young, English Porcelain 1745-95: Its Makers, Design, Marketing and Consumption (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1999), 154-177.

⁴¹ “Indeed, such country orders formed a very considerable portion of the trade of the principal London shopkeepers.” Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeepers, 224.

There seems little doubt that many trade cards were additionally posted in various locations in order to attract attention.⁴² Elliot points out that “Bills were posted up on the pillars in the nave of old St. Pauls containing advertisements or announcements invariably beginning with *Siquis* ‘if anyone,’”⁴³ and by the eighteenth century bill-posting was a large and organized trade, with both men and vehicles being hired to display boards and posters.⁴⁴ In his *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Daniel Defoe describes posters covering the “Posts of Houses, and Corners of Streets...with bills for doctors and quack medicines.”⁴⁵ Such a method of advertising may not have been cheap, however, as suggested by the announcement in *Perfect Occurrences*⁴⁶ of the opening of an Office of Entries “whatsoever is made known to the publique by expensive way of Bills posted or otherwise may be speedily known for the said 4d only and no more charge.”⁴⁷ The same advertisements for quack medicines, framed, no less, adorned the walls of coffee

⁴² There are problems with nomenclature here. References mention broadsides and posters, as well as bills. These may well be the same thing, since their size is changeable, to say the very least, from 5 1/4 inches by 3 inches to something much larger and more in keeping with what we now refer to as a poster. This variability in size suggests that small but decorative pieces, such as the average trade card, would be as apt for such presentation on hoardings as the more commonly known playbills.

⁴³ Blanche B. Elliott, *A History of English Advertising* (London: Business Publi. Ltd. in assoc. with B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1962), 11.

⁴⁴ Gillian Dyer, *Advertising as Communication* (London: Routledge, 1982), 28.

⁴⁵ Cited in T.R. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History* (London: Heinemann, 1982), 12. The issue of “The Daily Advertiser” for Friday, July 2, 1731 (held in the Burney Papers of the British Library) states at the bottom of the front page that “All Advertisements only are pasted up in all the several Public Parts of the Town, in order to render them the more Notorious and known, which is look’d upon to Answer the Chief End and Design of an Advertisement.”

⁴⁶ A post-Civil War newspaper.

⁴⁷ Cited in Nevett, *Advertising in Britain*, 12.

houses, as described in *The Tatler* of 21 October, 1710.⁴⁸ Why not, then, their more attractive cousins, trade cards? Indeed, with a transient audience who were more than content to sit and pass the time of day discoursing with friends and strangers alike, coffee houses must have seemed the ideal medium in which to advertise. During their heyday, they attracted all ranks (perhaps even women!), the monied as well as those who sought to be. Traders would have been hard pressed to find such an ideal location to display their cards. Indeed, coffee house walls were lined with other cheap prints,⁴⁹ most of them of a topical nature, and one can imagine that attractive trade cards, perhaps displayed for a price, attracted equal attention in quiet moments.

While distribution networks remain vague, one clear and common use of trade cards was as shopkeepers bills. Each collection sampled for this study contains many examples of trade cards which have been contemporarily notated as invoices and/or receipts. Indeed, in many cases trade cards have survived by virtue of their having been tied up in bundles of household accounts. This manner of usage seems to have begun sometime after the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and becomes less common toward its end.⁵⁰ Such trade cards/shop bills are also useful for the study of contemporary buying patterns and prices.

This introductory chapter to trade cards is intended to discuss generalisations which can be found in the production and use of the medium. The

⁴⁸ "The Tatler", Dec. 26, 1710, #268 in *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond, Vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 351.

⁴⁹ Timothy Clayton, *The English Print, 1688-1802* (New Haven and London: Yale, 1997), 23.

⁵⁰ It seems likely that by this time many shopkeepers had adopted specially printed bills of sale, many examples of which Heal collected. Also, fashionable trade cards had diminished so much in size that there was little room in which to delineate what were frequently very long accounts, indeed.

two chapters which follow will examine much more closely individual cards which are typical of their period. Although I have been at pains in this chapter to point out that the prevalence of anomalies mean that style cannot be used as a reliable guide for the dating of *individual* trade cards, enough of a pattern of change and development exists within the one hundred years under discussion that conclusions can be drawn about the importance and sophistication of illustrated advertising during the eighteenth century.

A discourse on luxury, virtue, and taste might seem a trifle rarified for a work which aims to illuminate a form of advertising, but while these subjects seem to have occupied more moral philosophers than shoppers and traders during the period under discussion, such a distinction is false. All ranks but the poorest would have been aware of the on-going commentary which was rife in print and conversation on all three subjects during the entire period covered by this paper. It is vital, then, to have some background to the society for which trade cards were produced before attempting to understand the trade cards themselves.

Luxury

No discussion of eighteenth century commercial enterprise would be complete without some examination of the contemporary luxury debate. Indeed, it provides the canvas upon which eighteenth century commerce was painted. John Sekora identifies it as the “greatest single social issue and the greatest single commonplace” of the eighteenth century.¹ The definition of luxury inherited by the seventeenth and eighteenth century derived from that of the ancient world in which luxury was a corrupted state of mind, rather than a adjective to describe an object which was particularly rich or attractive. It signalled self-interest over obedience to either God or the the natural leaders of the community. Luxury had a long history, which John Sekora traces from ancient Hebrew tradition, through Plato and

¹ John Sekora, Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1977), 75. Between the years 1721-71, more than 460 books and pamphlets were published on the subject of luxury. A decidedly feverish pitch was reached between 1756-63, the period of the Seven Years' War. Much of my understanding of this subject has been drawn from the introductory chapters of this work.

Aristotle, Sallust and Cicero, Augustine and Aquinas into the long eighteenth century. The common ground in the works of all these authors, despite the vast gulf of years, proved to be the foundation of much early eighteenth century criticism: that luxury upset the natural social order. Sallust ranged *virtus* (justice, honesty, industry, sobriety) on one side and *luxus* (ambition, pride, avarice, and luxury) on the other. Those whom nature appointed as leaders possessed the natural strength of character (*virtus*) to avoid the pit-falls of luxury. Lesser mortals possessed no such self-discipline. When they coveted the same comforts and conveniences enjoyed by their betters luxury resulted, and from luxury flowed most other vices. History, from the Bible onwards, proved that once luxury gained hold of a society, that society was doomed. The fate of Rome was the most common example given in British works on luxury, and to a nation whose thinkers were steeped in the study of classical authors, the example was a poignant one for the parallels they found with their own troublous times.

Craig Muldrew traces the root of the early modern luxury debate to the enormous growth in consumer spending which appears to have taken place between 1550-80 across a wide swath of English society, both geographically and in terms of social rank². Luxury, Muldrew notes, had only negative connotations until the beginning of the eighteenth century, and was associated with “dangerously overarching ambition and greed” of a sort which was likely to create a dangerously self-centered (as opposed to community-centred) individual. Indeed, this is a

² Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation* (London: MacMillan, 1998), 17-18. In his initial chapter, from which this quote is taken, Muldrew traces the development of the market in sixteenth century England, with particular emphasis on the development of credit networks, and the increase in spending on luxury commodities.

primary factor in the eighteenth century argument against luxury. The issue of power was also key: As a result of the Civil Wars and the Glorious Revolution, what had once been the proper natural order was already in dangerous disarray. The power of the Church had been weakened, as had that of the Monarchy and Court. To this source of widespread anxiety was added the increasing power of the new monied classes created by the financial revolution which began at the end of the seventeenth century. Increasingly power, both financial and political, was vested in people who lacked the natural foundation of good (traditional) leadership, which was land. Those who had been followers became, through money alone, leaders, without any of the traditional claims to virtuous power. An expansion of trade suddenly supplied goods for this new class which had previously been in the possession of society's leaders alone. Without the traditional controls of virtuous leadership, how could the pell-mell decline towards wanton self-aggrandisement be stopped? Society seemed to be turned topsy-turvy, just as it had been in ancient Rome. Luxury had taken hold, and from her corruption of the natural order only the demise of society could result.

Hardly surprisingly, London and urban centres generally, attracted great censure.³ Many saw London as a magnet for those who would better have stayed within the agrarian community, but who were lured to the city by temptation of the better life a trade promised. The commercial classes often bore the brunt of the complaints, as in John Brown's *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757)⁴ but most often it was the poor who were castigated most viciously,

³ Sekora, *Luxury*, 71. Sekora identifies works by Defoe, Hume, and especially Samuel Fawconer, whose *Essay on Modern Luxury* (1765) pinpoints London as a major source of corruption.

⁴ It went through a remarkable seven authorised or pirated editions in the year of its publication.

particularly at times of trouble caused by food shortages or war, because numbers were on their side and they posed the greatest threat to order. In more general terms, Fielding in his *Enquiry into the Cause of the Late Increase of Robbers* (1751) identified the worst offenders as those who “aspire to a Degree beyond that which belongs to them”⁵, which seems to encompass everyone in society below the King. Indeed, Sekora’s account leaves the reader with the impression that ‘luxury’ was a scapegoat, the quick and effective recourse for pessimists who presaged the end of society whenever social upheaval occurred, the rod with which to chastise the multitude whenever social strife reared its ugly head. It seems to have been used regardless of whatever truly lay at the root of the problem, whether it was fractured community, lack of strong moral leadership, or personal selfishness.

One distinct source of ire was a work by Bernard Mandeville, a man who, before its publication, had languished in comparative obscurity as a doctor of nervous conditions, and an anonymous author of both social commentary (*The Female Tatler*) and Whig diatribe. Mandeville’s satiric essay on the positive effects of a greed and avarice appeared first as *The Grumbling Hive* in 1714⁶. In his work, Mandeville turned the luxury argument on its head: if everyone abjured comforts and conveniences and embraced frugality, where would that leave national wealth? He identified mankind as naturally acquisitive and argued that self-aggrandisement frequently benefitted the state, rather than harming it, as most writers on luxury insisted. If the hive had grumbled before, it was nothing to the roar that went up when his satire was re-published in 1723. By July of the following year, it had twice

⁵ Quoted in Sekora, *Luxury*, 91.

⁶ This was published together with twenty other essays in 1723 as the *Fable of the Bees*, and it is from this date that his infamy became widespread.

been presented before the Grand Jury of Middlesex to the Court of the King's Bench as a public nuisance.⁷ The rebuttals were still being published eighty years later.⁸

Mandeville was hardly the only apologist for an acquisitive lifestyle, although he was perhaps the most offensive to Britain's virtuous self-opinion. Authors such as Samuel Johnson, Sir James Steuart, and Adam Ferguson used many of the same points, but more gently fashioned, and often with a reference to the good that would accrue to the poor with the increased economic strength which could be expected to develop through greater commercial enterprise. Their voices were never as numerous in print as the voices of the pessimists.

As to society at large: Sekora is of the opinion that "ordinary Englishmen probably were not as certain of their own minds as the philosophers and lawmakers of previous centuries." Though undoubtedly aware of the debate, and of the troublous incidents of civil unrest which often spurred a groundswell of luxury complaint, there can be no doubt that the opportunities to improve one's lot in life beyond mere necessities were numerous and tempting. Given human nature's ability to justify virtually any behaviour, it is hardly surprising that many of the new luxuries introduced from the end of the seventeenth century onwards came to be associated quite clearly with a *more* civilised way of life⁹, rather than with the depravity which was supposed to accompany luxury. Such decencies were certainly

⁷ Bernard Mandeville. The Fable of the Bees and Other Writings, abridged and edited by E.J. Hundert (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publ. Co., Inc., 1997), x.

⁸ Sekora, Luxury, 114.

⁹ Maxine Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present 182 (2004), 94.

distanced from the sort of luxuries which had wreaked havoc in ancient Rome¹⁰.

Indeed, the most effective arguments on the other side of the luxury debate were mounted by those who sought to *control* luxury by emphasising the civilising influence of former luxury goods, rather than to summarily eradicate them.

Consumption was a force to be dealt with, as Joyce Appleby so succinctly puts it¹¹, and especially at the beginning of the eighteenth century when so many ordinary people could afford so many goods, there was pressure to transform, or to socialise, luxury, to make it less of a threat and more of a boon. This other side of the luxury debate appears briefly in Muldrew's work as part of his discussion of the credit system which formed the foundation of this acquisitive period. He notes that "household wealth was also part of the commonwealth".¹² Although I have yet to see the same words used contemporarily in the eighteenth century, such an attitude seems to have been expressed by those many writers who viewed the acquisition of luxury goods as enriching England as a whole, not only because local industry often provided vital sources of employment for the poor, but because the widespread ability to do so evinced England's domination of trade and ability to manufacture at home. Then, too, profit was widely deemed to be the just reward for diligent effort and constant labour.¹³ The ability to afford decencies and luxuries clearly signalled not only the ability to pay, but also the ability (based on trust-worthiness,

¹⁰ Berg argues through "In Pursuit of Luxury" that Oriental luxury goods were replaced by goods of British manufacture, thus ending yet another criticism of luxury expenditures: that they enriched foreign countries to the impoverishment of Britain.

¹¹ Joyce Appleby, "Consumption in Early Modern Social Thought" in Consumption and the World of Goods, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1994), 164-65.

¹² Muldrew, The Economy of Obligation, 125.

¹³ Muldrew, The Economy of Obligation, 17.

i.e. virtue) to attract credit. Further benefits accrued as consumer demand encourage merchants, traders and manufacturers to chance greater investment in production improvements which could answer the increased demand. In turn, innovations eventually resulted in lower prices, which led to a broader market and hence, even greater demand. By such a yardstick, refusal to invest in decencies and luxuries could be considered as the hoarding of wealth (especially specie) which was frowned upon not only as miserliness, but as a threat to the livelihood of the community at large. Money was needed to fuel the economy.

The debate over luxury exercised minds throughout the century.¹⁴ Clearly, the burgeoning ranks of the middling sort, especially, were not going to stop consuming, regardless of the encouragement of philosophers or the warnings of fear-mongers; therefore, attitudes to luxury consumption had to change. The nub of much positive argument was that, so long as controls were applied in the form of adherence to tenets of Virtue and Taste, indulgence in purchases which might once have been condemned as self-serving could be widely considered to be beneficial; and so it is that we turn now to those twin sources of control.

Virtue, Shaftesbury and Politeness

As discussed above, the classical definition of luxury held sway through much of the eighteenth century. It seemed to many that a descent into the evils of

luxury could only be prevented by the exercise of civic virtues---justice, benevolence,

¹⁴ As to the reflection in trade card advertising of the weight of the luxury debate, I must say that I have found very little. The use of the word 'luxury' was very rare in trade cards. Far more emphasis was put on the 'Reasonable Rates', 'Neatest and Genteel Taste' and 'newest fashion' of whatever goods were being promoted. By such reminders it would seem that advertisers were suggesting that their goods should not be considered as luxuries in the pejorative sense, but as decencies, which tasteful, careful and thrifty consumers could purchase without endangering either their financial security or their moral standing in the community or nation at large.

magnanimity and, above all, self-denial. But the traditional sources of those virtues, the monarchy and the Church, were to a great extent weakened by the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution. By the end of the seventeenth century, the growth of the monied classes, unnatural leaders by classical standards, further threatened the fabric of the community with a distorted set of values which seemed to put self-interest ahead of that of the community. To fill this void, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, developed his own philosophy of civic virtue and politeness. His ideas coalesced in *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* of 1711 (a revised edition was issued in 1714.) This was a miscellany of essays, many of which had been previously published, which provided a prescription for community strength based on the power of the gentleman (the landed aristocracy) and his exercise of civic virtue (or politeness) and liberty in society.

Self-knowledge was the essence of civic virtue, and discourse was vital to its formation. Liberty in every facet of life was essential to the establishment of open, free, easy, and honest discourse. Gravity and simplicity in conversation (or in writing) allied with an easy raillery and humour engendered a society which could freely, gently, and above all, *pleasantly*, discuss all subjects, to the end that right judgement in all things, from aesthetics to government might be arrived at amicably. Any teaching was by example; any advice was delivered through discussion, rather than instruction. A society so marked by solicitous manners---by politeness--- could not fail but govern itself with liberty and justice. Virtue in private became virtue in the city and the nation overall.

At the root of this new form of virtue---politeness--- lay simplicity and

restraint, which were to be practiced in all the arts, whether conversation, literature, fine, or applied. Shaftesbury railed forcibly against the destructiveness of mannered behaviour, affectation, and a desire to impress by pomp and ceremony, hence his criticism of both Court and Church, but he was equally dismissive of 'imposture' in the arts. The illustrations he chose with great thought for the first edition of his *Characteristics* are interesting models of the contemporary ideal of artistic restraint. They are Italianate in character, classically derived, symmetrical, and lavish in their use of the rounded, sculptural forms of the Baroque.¹⁵ The style had been in use in London, especially, since the last decades of the preceding century. It was by then more French than Italian, though having been in common use in England for so long (ironically, mainly by Huguenot designers and craftsmen), Shaftesbury would have used such motifs as English examples, rather than the work of the affected and bullying French culture he openly deplored. Indeed, such late-flowering Baroque work balanced itself neatly between the frivolously busy and attenuated style of decoration then common at the French court (the nascent Rococo), and the ponderous, and serious Palladian style also in its infancy in England, much as Shaftesbury believed that ideal social behaviour achieved an ideal balance somewhere between the pedantic and the flighty.

Though Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* went into a further edition in 1714, and at least 8 more editions before 1790, it is doubtful that they had as broad a readership as the other insistent voice for virtue, *The Spectator*. Such was the popularity of this daily journal, which began publication on Thursday March 1, 1711, that by the tenth issue, its principal author, Joseph Addison, estimated its

¹⁵ When obvious decoration does, finally, appear in trade cards near the beginning of the eighteenth century, it is in this form.

readership to be close to three thousand per issue. Donald Bond suggests that the actual numbers could have been closer to four thousand near the end of its run in 1712.¹⁶ Addison was very particular about the audience he assumed would enjoy his work and those to whom he directed his writing: “well-regulated Families;” those men who “either by the Affluence of their Fortunes, or Laziness of their Dispositions, have no other business with the rest of Mankind but to look upon them”; and “the female world”¹⁷ The list is an important one: while Shaftesbury wrote for an elite readership, Addison and his partners wrote for the gentry and the middling ranks, and most especially for the female element in both. His audience frequented not the “Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges” in which Philosophy had previously made its home, but “Clubs and Assemblies... tea-tables...coffee houses.” He and his fellow authors were fully aware of “that desperate State of Vice and Folly into which the Age is fallen.” Their expressed object was “to make their instruction agreeable, and their Diversion useful. For which Reasons I shall endeavor to enliven Morality with Wit, and to temper Wit with Morality.”¹⁸ The well-spring of virtue, on which subject they occupied many pages, had shifted from the Court and the academy, even from the drawing rooms of aristocratic homes (where Shaftesbury centred it) to the front parlour and public meeting-places of the new professional classes. In other words, *The Spectator* sought to vest control

¹⁶ Donald Bond, ed., *The Spectator* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), xxvi. “Aitken (*Life of Steele*, i. 319-20) makes much the same computation. ‘A payment of over £20 a week for stamp duty represents a daily circulation of more than 1600 copies, or 10,000 a week, from the 1st August to the 6th December 1712, and the daily circulation before the 1st August would therefore be, according to Steele’s statement, nearly 4000.’

¹⁷ Bond, *The Spectator*, Vol. 1, (March 12, 1711), 44-46.

¹⁸ Bond, *The Spectator*, Vol 1, (March 12, 1711), 44.

of virtue within the group which, from the late seventeenth century onwards, most particularly challenged the early modern status quo, the very group which were at the same time drawing wrath and condemnation from those who worried about the downward spiral of society into luxury.

Civic virtue is not a term which appears in “The Spectator”, however the virtues it praises were likely to benefit the community at large. Steele mentions ‘civil virtue’ in discussing the need for self-denial. It is clear from the context of the essay that he is referring to self-denial in the service of the public, for the bent of the piece is to convince the reader that every citizen has the power to become a “Heroe” in the classical sense.¹⁹ The fullest discussion of the nature of virtue is undertaken in number 243 by Addison.²⁰ In it he discusses specific virtues against a backdrop of classical authors and schools, drawing the point that some are such “as dispose us to do Good to Mankind.” These are temperance, abstinence, faith and devotion. Those most likely to result in personal benefit are Justice, Charity, and Munificence. Other aspects of virtuous behaviour appear in a number of essays: constancy and moderation of words and actions, modesty or decency; frugality and generosity; good-nature ; discretion; courage and honour.²¹ Both Addison and Steele (and occasionally Eustace Budgell, another contributor) return repeatedly to the admonition that all the characteristics of virtue are empty without a grounding of religious faith and also good nature, or cheerfulness. Interestingly, Addison feels that Virtue is most likely to flourish in the audience to which he

¹⁹ Bond, The Spectator, Vol 2 (Dec. 14, 1711), 462

²⁰ Bond, The Spectator, Vol 2 (Dec. 8, 1711), 443-446.

²¹ Bond, The Spectator, Vol 1 (June 19, 1711), 432-435; Vol 1 (July 3, 1711) 443-445; Vol 2 (Sept. 22, 1711) 197-201; Vol 2 (No.v 17, 1711) 375-378; Vol 3 (Mar.27, 1712) 246-250;

addresses his journal, those of “the middle condition” (#464) because poverty often reduces a man to envy, “Fraud, vicious Compliance, Repining, Murmur and Discontent” while riches are too often attended by arrogance “Pride and Luxury, a foolish Elation of Heart, and too great a Fondness for the present World.” It would seem that the re-ordering of society caused by the revolution of 1688 and the later financial revolution, which caused fear for so many, actually engendered in Addison a hope for improvement in the future.

Like Shaftesbury, Addison and Steele believed that instruction was best delivered by example. Indeed, the overall style in the essays is to present a problem, a solution, and then, by way of example, a parable of sorts, drawn either from current society or from the ancient classical. These are often amusing, and usually light in sense and feel, but they are effective in that they put the message into practice for all to consider. The message is repeated in the summation of the essay to reinforce it yet again. What Addison and his fellow authors did far more than Shaftesbury was to give their instruction in simple, direct terms. These have much in common with trade card advertising (and, indeed, all advertising) of the same period.

Whether referred to as ‘civic’ or not, underlying both the *Characteristics* and the lessons in *The Spectator* is an emphasis on the value of *individual* virtue to the community. No longer could virtue be vested solely in the Crown or aristocracy, nor was the Church any longer a powerful source of moral direction. Regardless of the extraordinary changes wrought in English society as a result of the Civil Wars, the Glorious Revolution, and the financial revolution of the late seventeenth century, so long as virtue was practised *individually*, regardless of rank, regardless of the

source of financial security, the safety and longevity of society would not be threatened. Thus, the Shaftesburian/Addisonian redefinition of virtue prescribed a form of behaviour compatible with a commercial society centred, as it was by the early eighteenth century, on public and private credit. Industry, a healthy self-regard, prudence, forbearance and compassion became prescribed behaviours; but something more was needed for the regulation of an acquisitive society which seemed still to teeter on the edge of the morass of luxury.

Taste

Taste is at present the darling idol of the polite world and the world of letters; and, indeed, seems to be considered as the quintessence of almost all the arts and sciences. The fine ladies and gentlemen dress with Taste; the architects, whether Gothic or Chinese, build with Taste; the painters paint with Taste; critics read with Taste; and, in short, fiddlers, players, singers, dancers and mechanics themselves are all the Sons and Daughters of Taste. Yet in this amazing super-abundance of Taste, few can say what it really signifies.

The Connoisseur, May 1756.

In an increasingly sociable and mercantile society, one in which a dizzying array of new and suspiciously luxurious goods were available for purchase by the middling and professional ranks, some idea of what was virtuous, permissible and desirable required careful delineation. Many authors, Shaftesbury and Addison amongst them, focussed on the exercise of Taste. Discourse on the subject was so widespread that it is inconceivable that shopkeepers should have been unaware or even careless of its importance.

For the eighteenth century reader or consumer, Taste was, in the simplest terms, the appreciation of beauty. To Shaftesbury, the recognition of beauty was a

sign of virtue; his opinions, as noted earlier, had repercussions throughout the century. The importance of the ability to identify beauty can hardly be exaggerated for, by extension, the ability to distinguish what was beautiful from what was false indicated an ability to make a similar wise judgement between what was good in society and what was evil, what was decency and what was empty luxury. Therefore, the possession of Taste indicated a moral ability to engage in broader discourse for the public good. As to the actual criteria of beauty as understood in the eighteenth century, even Hogarth admits in his sub-title to the *Analysis of Beauty* that it was, for those who dared to venture into those churning aesthetic waters, “fluctuating” at best. Indeed, he says “For though beauty is seen and confessed by all, yet, from the many fruitless attempts to account for the cause of its being so, enquiries on this head have almost been given up; and the subject generally thought to be a matter of too high and too delicate a nature to admit of any true or intelligible discussion.”²² However, inasmuch as a regard for taste was obvious in trade card advertising, an understanding of who possessed it, and of how it was acquired and cultivated is of vital interest.

To begin, many contemporary commentators felt that Taste was either born in every man or was easily developed. This latter opinion was held by Addison and Steele, and was one which William Hogarth admitted tacitly by sub-titling his *Analysis of Beauty* “Written with a view of fixing the fluctuating IDEAS of TASTE.” Jonathan Richardson likewise felt that Taste was ‘ a profoundly learnable activity improving its practitioners.’²³ . The same opinion was echoed by John Gilbert

²² Hogarth, William (ed. Ronald Paulson) *The Analysis of Beauty* (New Haven and London: Yale, 1997), p.1.

²³ Robert W. Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste*, 39.

Cooper in his *Letter Concerning Taste*.²⁴ Some authors, Cooper amongst them, felt that while an initial burst of delight at the sight of beauty was within the grasp of all, greater discernment and understanding of the rules which defined an object as beautiful were available to those who cared to search beyond the initial delight. Vital to this pursuit was not only the knowledge that Taste was a valuable quality worth deeper consideration, but also the leisure in which to actually pursue a deeper consideration of it. The possession of this necessary leisure was limited to those for whom the sordid matter of making money no longer impinged itself on everyday life. Thus, Taste became a discriminating quality which demarcated the leisured from the worker, the wise from the merely feeling, the learned from the ignorant, the favoured few from the ill-favoured masses. Possession of taste not only allowed the possessor to discriminate the beautiful from the ugly, it gave him membership in an elite composed of those who possessed the same virtue.

I have used masculine pronouns to this point, not merely out of a desire for semantic clarity, but also because so many contemporary works (with the notable exception of *The Spectator*) use the same mode. The use is problematic, however. In his illuminating work on gender and taste in eighteenth-century England, R.W. Jones builds a formidable argument to support what can only be the logical assumption that women were primary consumers of both the literature surrounding Taste and the objects which signified it within the home. Although extant bills of sale are often made out to the gentleman of the house, I have long suspected that he did little of the shopping. Many authors, among them David Fordyce (1754 *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*) David Hume (*Of Progress in the*

²⁴ Quoted in Robert W. Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste*, 70.

Arts and Sciences) and Alexander Gerard (*An Essay on Taste with Dissertations on the Same Subject by de Voltaire, D'Albert and de Montesquieu*, 1759) appointed women as the proper arbiters of taste. Indeed, their vital role in domestic society may be deduced by their presence at the centre of so many conversation pieces²⁵ painted from early to mid-century. William Hogarth's charming group portrait of the Western Family is a case in point. His carefully constructed, sinuous serpentine line dips firmly and significantly directly over the head of Mrs. Western, seated in front of a silvered tea table. She has placed her hand on her husband's sleeve while he attempts to instruct his servant on the delivery of a letter. She *will* have his attention. Whatever it is he speaks about is secondary in her estimation to the dead bird her son (or son-in-law) has just brought in and is displaying rather haphazardly, dangling in one hand. All the action revolves around her. So, although much debate has been exercised on the reliability of these paintings as records of ownership, there can be no doubt as to their being records ---by male artists and likely paid for by male heads of household--- of familial authority, at least on rituals as highly socially significant as that of taking tea, dead birds notwithstanding. The reasoning behind this is complex, but stems in part from the common association of Taste and sociability. Many early eighteenth-century authors felt that Taste was best tried in a social environment, and tried through the test of sensibility. Addison makes frequent reference throughout the numbers of *The Spectator* to the winnowing effect of tea-table conversation. This virtue was

²⁵ The conversation piece was a major art form in England from c. 1720 through c. 1760. A form of group portrait, the sitters, anywhere from two in number to scores of family and friends, were always shown engaged in socially laudable situations, most commonly, taking tea or entertaining others in cultured milieu such as the home's drawing room or library (actual or fictive). The most complete study of which I am aware is Charles Saumarez Smith's exhaustive *Eighteenth-Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England*.

most present in women, as David Hume notes “I am of the Opinion, that Women, that is Women of Sense and Education (for to such alone do I address myself) are much better Judges of all polite Writing than men of the same Degree of Understanding.”²⁶ Alexander Gerard is even more determined. In *An Essay on Taste*, he argued that women had a greater “sensibility of Taste.”²⁷

Throughout his work on gender and taste, Jones puts more emphasis on the female arbitration of taste than I feel is realistic. His argument lacks the other, Shaftesburian, side. This point notwithstanding, there can be no doubt that a significant segment of the writing and publishing world thought that female arbitration of taste had to be recognized for its importance. This point, together with the obvious importance of shopping as a common leisure activity for women of substance, made their interest in fashion of some importance to the shopkeepers who used trade card advertising. Faced as they were by a constant, threatening undercurrent of criticism by those who feared that commerce would lead glorious England to the conjoined misery of luxury and effeminacy, shopkeepers ignored the persuasive and beneficial powers of women at their peril.

The Economic Background to the First Period

At the point when trade cards first appear, the population of England was

²⁶ Quoted in Jones p.84, who goes on to observe that, while Hume fails to explain the rationale behind his judgement, he is reflecting “the assumption, common in the eighteenth century, that women possessed a disinterested as well as a natural gentility.” Hume’s trust in female judgement is conditional on a careful male scrutiny of their behaviour, lest they mistake ‘the substance for the shadow.’

²⁷ Quoted in Robert W. Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste*, 85.

roughly 5.23 million. Some 50 years later it had actually dropped to 5.06 million²⁸. While the overall population numbers stagnated, that part of it in urban centres increased from 13.5 percent of the population in 1670 to 17 percent in 1700. Hardly surprisingly, London featured largely in this displacement from the countryside, accounting for roughly 11.5 percent of England's population by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Migration to cities and towns was often undertaken in the hopes of employment and betterment overall. It certainly swelled both the urban labouring ranks, and by the same token the number of those who were consumers of foodstuffs and manufactured goods produced by others. The increased demand then resulted in a growth of the marketplace for such goods. While true of many provincial centres, it was especially true of London.

While the population growth which had marked the earlier seventeenth century eased after c. 1670, agricultural output increased as a result of improvements which had been decades in the making²⁹. This resulted in lower grain prices and livestock prices which remained relatively static. As well, by 1710 the prices of industrial goods had fallen by roughly 10 percent from the level of the early seventeenth century.³⁰ Thus although wages fell slightly in the period immediately before 1700, purchasing power actually increased, and for a broad

²⁸ Wrightson, Earthly Necessities, 229-231. This drop was due to many factors, not the least of which were a drop in fertility to c. 1675; a rise in infant and child mortality, and an overall drop in life expectancy, which can likely be linked to the steadily increasing population of urban centres where disease could more easily spread. Migration also accounted for a drop in population, with roughly 240,000 people leaving England between 1650 and 1700 with hopes of a better life in the new world.

²⁹ Wrightson, Earthly Necessities, 233. These improvements included (but were not limited to) an increased use of fertilisers, diversification of crops based on developing market demand (especially from urban centres), the sowing of fallow crops such as clover and rye grass, the increased floating of water meadows to improve soil quality, and, of course, enclosure.

³⁰ All numbers from Wrightson, Earthly Necessities, 230-231.

swath of the population, a surplus income allowed investment in objects which were contemporarily deemed 'decencies' rather than simply 'necessities', the very sort of object frequently advertised in trade cards. This surplus income became even more marked in the period from 1730 to 40, when a series of good harvests dropped the price of basic food stuffs even further. Under such circumstances, many must have been lured into setting up shop in order to cater to the growing market. Alas, the statistics relating to the growth in the number of shopkeepers in London, or any urban centre, during this period is singularly, and frustratingly, lacking. Logic, and a vastly increased number of trade cards for the period 1700-25, suggests that shops were growing in number, and that many more were turning to this form of advertising in order to draw the attention of potential customers.

Many businesses may have cost only a few pounds to set up, depending on the nature of the business, but even this small amount could easily be lost if not handled carefully. All forms of business during this period were plagued by the threat of bankruptcy, most commonly engendered by dependence on credit. Widespread interdependency on credit had begun in the early sixteenth century, and was still the foundation of business in the seventeenth, and indeed, throughout the eighteenth. The shopkeeper depended on the trust of his suppliers as much as he depended on the honesty of his customers. Each would be paid, or would pay, in time. But before then, the shopkeeper, especially, walked a narrow tight-rope of safety, balancing both his debts and his credits as best he could. At any time disaster might strike in the form of untimely death, or the knock-on effect of a debtor, be he friend, family-member or colleague, who had tumbled off the tight-rope into bankruptcy, thus bringing down with him all those to whom he owed

money. Richard Grassby's figures note that there were roughly 50 commissions of bankruptcy in London in the 1650's, compared to 150-200 from 1710 to 1730. The actual rate was between 1 and 2% annually.³¹ This does not account for the large number of traders who would have ceased trading voluntarily before the bailiff came to call. Of those who survived, many managed only to maintain a foothold in the financial bracket into which they entered; they failed to better it.³² The need to improve the stability of the shop, let alone improve one's financial position, through increasing custom was all-important. The urge to advertise must have been a strong one.

Trade Cards to 1700

Early trade cards did little more than inform in simple terms. Their content, apart from the illustration (which was produced using either engraving or woodblock), was limited in most cases to instructions on how to find the shop, for example "John Burroughs at the Glasse house without Ludgate London" (illustration #1.) Most examples are that direct. There are no attempts to flatter, few attempts to list fashionable goods, and no attempts to impress by association with the aristocracy; these are all developments which occurred during the mid-period of

³¹ Richard Grassby, The Business Community of Seventeenth Century England (Cambridge: Univ. Press., 1995), 253.

³² Grassby, Business Community, 267.

trade card design. Occasionally, one finds a short list of goods on offer³³, and just as rarely mention of “Reasonable rates”. This simplicity of language suggests that, while competition between different tradesmen was rigorous enough to require advertising, there were still few enough shops that careful delineation of location was enough to ensure the attendance or return of the consumer to the right shop.

Where lists are used, they too are short and simple. One fine example, which is dated in the engraving to 1698, states that “At the Signe of the Tare live’s one Mr. Grenier who makes all Sorts of good Rasors, Lancets, Sisers very well and all other Sorts of instruments for Chirurgeons”³⁴ (illustration #2.) Note here that the name of the tradesman is not the first piece of information given, but an identification of the shop sign. This priority of sequence is by no means unusual in trade cards of this date. Philip Hunt (whose trade card dates roughly 1680 to 1720--illustration #3) buried his name after listing “Cabenetts, Looking Glasses, Tables and Stanns, Scretors, Chests of Drawers, And Curious inlaid Figures for any worke made and Sold By Phillip Hunt at Ye Looking Glass & Cabenet at East end of St. Pauls Church Yd.” Only later does name recognition become important.

³³ George Minnikin, Stationer at the Kings head in St. Martins Le-grand near Aldersgate makes & sells all sorts of Japan & other colourd pap *hangings both in Sheets & Yards & sells all sorts of Stationary wares at Reasonable rates” (sic). This is one of the Pepys cards. Heal dates it to 1676. I have no evidence to suggest this is anything but accurate. The King’s head mentioned is a fairly accurate portrait of Charles II.

³⁴ Throughout this study the spelling will copy exactly that used in the trade cards. Unfortunately, my computer does not allow me to use the cursive ‘S’, which continued in sporadic use to the end of the eighteenth century; see paragraph below for more details.

Of the six cards chosen from the Pepys collection³⁵ four begin with the words “Bought of...” This indicates that the card was used originally as an invoice, although this does not preclude its use in other ways. By the middle of the eighteenth century traders of any moment had separate invoices printed, which were similar to, though much less decorative than their trade cards. My experience is that these few cards in the Pepys collection are unusual in that most tradesmen seem to have opted not to limit their choices in such a way. A standard trade card, especially if it was printed on paper far larger than was necessary for the image (frequent throughout the centuries under discussion: most have been subsequently cut down), would provide ample room for the long lists of purchases (often over several months) which made up the typical invoice. Without the words which would identify it as an invoice, the standard trade card could be posted as a bill, handed out to passers-by, delivered with newspapers, any of the possible uses described in the previous chapter.

Some mention should be made here of the use of the term ‘ye’. While I have seen its usage in trade cards as late as the 1740’s and possibly even the 1750’s, it is a usage which is primarily limited to the late seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and can therefore be used fairly reliably to date cards within these years. Further to the usage of shortened forms, throughout both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries common words such as ‘Yard’, as in “St. Pauls Church Yd.” (sometimes appearing as one word and sometimes as two, here)

³⁵ Of the twelve cards chosen to represent the period before the turn of the eighteenth century, six are from the collection of Samuel Pepys. Pepys collected them (perhaps not actively, but merely coincidentally as they appeared with merchandise or on his doorstep) from as early as 1660 to as late as 1703, the year of his death. The forty cards are lodged in the Pepysian Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, carefully cropped (unfortunately) and pasted into that section of his collection called “Vulgaria”. The collection may be viewed by prior appointment only.

were usually shortened to save space. As to general spelling, the reader should be aware that until the end of the eighteenth century, spelling was not standardized, and often merely reflects pronunciation, as in the Hunt example above.

The form taken by this lettering is another fairly reliable means of dating. During the very early period of trade card production, it would appear that the man who cut the illustration also cut the lettering-----a production technique which was to change early in the eighteenth century. While some early examples show a fairly polished hand³⁶ (those produced for tradesmen with obviously French names, especially), many are marked by a distinct lack of sophistication: the spacing between the letters is uneven, as is the letter size; some letters are given far more of a slope than others; there is no cadence between thick and thin lines in ascenders and descenders. The attempt in most cases is to copy, by hand, the Roman type used in most printed documents of the period, allying it, rather uncomfortably in most cases I have seen, with a gentle italic hand. The result is a style more in keeping with the round hand so popular with the English writing masters, whose work was so enormously popular from the late seventeenth through the early eighteenth centuries.³⁷ It was a style eminently suited to commerce because it was easily and quickly worked and far more legible than many of the more artistic continental lettering styles. The many books of round hand produced in England

³⁶ It is not unusual in even finer examples to see the scribe lines visible where the engraver has neglected, or been unable, to polish these out. Later engravers were adept enough to work without such aids.

³⁷ Alas, there is no room to discuss the work of the masters. Alexander Nesbitt's The History and Technique of Lettering contains much useful information on the subject, and George Bickham's The Universal Penman is a wonderful example of the later flowering of this art, being published in 1743. (Dover has published affordable editions of both), also, Ambrose Heal's (1931) The English Writing-masters and Their Copybooks, published by the Cambridge University Press in 1931.

during the period give evidence that engravers were more than capable of mimicking the skill of the original calligraphers, but this engraving skill rarely turns up in trade cards, probably because the cost of having a specialised engraver added too much to the total costs of the card. It is the rather stilted lettering of the early examples which immediately, and reliably, betrays their age (illustration #1.)

The illustrations of the very early period reflect, almost without exception, the sign which hung over the door. In this the illustration reflects exactly the content of the message: here is the sign to look for, and below are instructions on how to find it. In some cases there is no attempt to decorate at all. If there is a frame, it copies, I think, that which surrounded the shop sign. In many cases, however, there is some attempt to provide a more decorative frame, as in the case of Ellis Crispe, whose card, is dated in the engraving '1669' (illustration #4) These frames may also mimic those hung outside the shop, but I rather think not, inasmuch as they are highly decorative and in terms of the carving work involved would have represented a vast outlay. Without exception they use the visual vocabulary of the Baroque style as adapted from the Restoration onwards by both English, and Huguenot craftsmen at work in London.

Crispe's shop sign is set within a pedimented frame, a type which was very popular during the period³⁸. Such an austere classical architectonic device was popular not only in print, for use on title pages of books and the like, but in exterior and interior architecture (as door frames) and on large pieces of case furniture, such as the increasingly fashionable bureau bookcase. Either side of the pediment is supported by Tuscan-type columns, another architectonic device of classical

³⁸ It bears the date '1669' in the engraving.

derivation. Below the frame's bottom rail are two symmetrical scrolling volutes from which hang swags of flowers and what appear to be fruit. Both the scroll and these floral/fruited swags were common decorative devices in the classical (and here fundamentally Renaissance) vocabulary used in trade cards as well as in textile design, silver design (in embossing), painting on pottery and in interior design (modelled in plaster or stucco). So, too, was the perpendicular frame as used in Crispe's card. These decorative features may be present here because the artist who designed the card was conversant with their use. It is as likely that these devices are integrated because the tradesman wished to advertise his knowledge of taste and fashion. Since both will play an increasingly vital role in trade card design, they deserve fuller explanation here.

The Influence of Taste and Fashion - The Baroque

At one time, perhaps as late as the reign of Elizabeth I, those who ruled society could differentiate themselves from those below by a variety of means, the ownership of luxury goods being an important one. The proliferation of these goods either by increased imports or the development of home industries to answer demand, meant that simple ownership no longer guaranteed status. Chandra Mukerji³⁹, among many others, cites the rise of fashionable change as a means to identify status. Novelty drove this market, novelty of object, but also novelty of style. The first strongly identifiable style was that of the Renaissance, which first appeared in very tentative form at the court of Henry VIII, and acquired a very English character under his daughter Elizabeth I. The Baroque style was a

³⁹ Chandra Mukerji, From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism (New York: Columbia U.P., 1983), 20-28.

development of the Renaissance style using much the same visual vocabulary. It is a more sculptural style, however, which takes Renaissance motifs like scrolls and makes them central to decoration rather than peripheral. Under Dutch and French influence, the Baroque style became much more dependent on natural motifs, such as flowers and fruit, than that which had originated in Italy towards the beginning of the seventeenth century. In England, the style reached its apex with the return of Charles II from exile. He had drunk deeply of the style while sheltering at various European courts (among them that of the Louis XIV, who used the ornate and extravagant style to great political success at both the palace of the Louvre, and of course, at Versailles), and he used it as much as he was able in the restoration of various court venues during his reign. More importantly still, members of the Court assimilated the style and used it for the same ends in their own homes, a delightful example of which is Ham House, the Richmond home of the upstart Duke and Duchess of Lauderdale.⁴⁰ Homes and lifestyles such as these prompted in part the widespread adoption of this new fashion amongst the broader consumer classes.

On the one hand, this following of the elite part of society can be viewed as a desire to emulate. I put little faith in the Veblen effect⁴¹ as a widely diffused catalyst for consumer behaviour simply because there are so many other possibilities. At the end of the seventeenth century, and throughout the eighteenth (and arguably still!) the novelty value of a style or object was a powerful stimulant to consumer behaviour, as was practicality (washing cottons instead of brushing velvets), or

⁴⁰ Under the generous protection of the National Trust, this home is open to view annually from April to the end of October .

⁴¹ Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 20. The term 'Veblen Effect' refers to the theory put forward by Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) that imitative and emulative spending is the central mechanism accounting for a dramatic upsurge in demand.

increased specialisation (a table to write on, rather than the top of a storage chest). Equally important is the connexion between ownership of fashionable consumer durables and virtue. At the end of the seventeenth century a knowledge of current fashion and an ability to embrace it, either in personal dress, interior design, or fine art, was suggestive of far more than income; it expressed the personal virtue of the consumer. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, virtue, in its Addisonian guise, was what separated the better part of society from its baser elements, the 'us' from the 'them', and taste was a corollary to virtue.⁴² While there was certainly no handbook on taste available (though the Earl of Shaftesbury's letters to his son provided a few cogent guidelines to behaviour, and Steele and Addison did their best to guide taste toward simplicity *with* simplicity in the pages of the *Spectator* and the *Tatler*) good taste in the arts was certainly bound up with classical precepts, either in their Baroque guise or its modified, more architecturally-based, early eighteenth century form, the Palladian. It is this style, this indication of good taste, which is reflected in so many of the frames and decorative devices which decorate an increasing number of the trade cards produced during the first forty years of the eighteenth century. Perhaps tradesmen were merely following the advice of their hired artists in their choice of design, but it is every bit as likely, I feel, given the widespread public debate taking place in print and conversation, that tradesmen were beginning to realize that an awareness of taste was an important hook with which to lure in potential customers.

⁴² Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 153. "This view has profound implications for patterns of consumption since these individuals are bound to regard all those objects which advertise their taste as indicating their moral standing."

In some cases, shopkeepers had no need to depend on artists to instruct them in fashionable design. Many historians, amongst them Peter Earle⁴³ and Richard Grassby⁴⁴ make the point that by the late seventeenth century business and trade were viable alternatives to the professions for many younger sons of both the aristocracy and the gentry. Gentlemen who were left, if not penniless on the death of the patriarch, at least in hardened circumstances, did not always demure at taking up a trade as merchant or shopkeeper. Raised in households in which fashionable goods in the latest style had been as common as the leisure to enjoy them, it is only logical that gentlemen who braved the world of shopkeeping would bring to their business that same solicitude toward taste with which they had grown up.

It is small wonder, then, that the personal refinement so widely prescribed for those civilised individuals in society manifested itself in trade cards (and other printed matter, ephemera included.) Taste, and hence virtue, in the decorative and fine arts were evinced by the use of the classical motifs previously noted, tightly bound, restrained from too-obvious opulence and organised symmetrically. This arrangement must be clearly understood, since many of the decorative elements characteristic of the Baroque turn up again, but used in an asymmetrical manner, in mid-century cards.

⁴³ Peter Earle, The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1600-1730 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1989), 86-89.

⁴⁴ Richard Grassby, The Business Community, 144. Also Lorna Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760 2nd Edition (London: Routledge, 1996), 180; Lawrence Stone "Social mobility in England 1500-1700," in Seventeenth Century England: Society in an Age of Revolution, ed. Paul S. Seaven (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), 63.

Trade Cards Between 1700 and 1740

The turn of the century makes a useful division between those rather austere and classically decorated cards of the Pepys collection (and others) and the more sophisticated cards which mark the first forty years of the eighteenth century. It must be repeated, however, that not all tradesmen and trade card designers were blown onto new courses by the winds of change. Even as some trade cards show remarkable changes, many traders stuck firmly to the formulae which had succeeded with previous generations: no frame, shop sign only, and minimal information in a roman or round hand. In 1715 Henry Peirson, Sworn Appraiser, commissioned a trade card illustrating his shop sign in a perpendicular frame---the date is 'carved' into the frame (illustration #5). The copy of the trade card now in the possession of the Guildhall Library was used as a shop bill in 1749. The lettering and wording have been up-dated for the most part⁴⁵ (see chapter 5), but the image remains the same. Presumably Mr. Peirson felt either that the expense of a new image on his cards was beyond his fiscal capabilities or needs, or he knew that his shop sign would be immediately recognizable to his clientele (which must have been considerable after thirty-four years in business) and realized the value therein⁴⁶. For whatever reason, it would appear that many traders through the early period saw no need to change, and the earlier naive versions are just as likely to turn up, perhaps newly engraved, in 1740. The only difference might be in the

⁴⁵ I am indebted to Dr. Gordon Fulton (Department of English, University of Victoria) for pointing out Peirson's use of words ending in 'eth' (e.g. buyeth) is archaic by 1749.

⁴⁶ It must be borne in mind, however, that for various reasons, tradesmen who lasted more than a generation in business were the exception rather than the rule. Early mortality and the risks of bankruptcy either through their own misfortune or mismanagement, or through the misfortune of those upon whom the tradesman was dependent, the opportunity or need to upgrade a trade card did not often arise.

more polished hand of the calligraphic engraving.

As early as the first decade of the eighteenth century more sophisticated elements of Baroque design appeared in trade cards than had been present in the previous decades.⁴⁷ Certainly by this period there was a wealth of design books and single pages available to craftsmen in all walks of the decorative arts, engravers not the least of these. Most of the designs came from France, penned by illustrious artists (many attached to the court) such as Jean Bérain, Juste-Aurele Meissonier, and Nicholas Pineau. The Baroque, and similar classical styles, lent themselves to designers because the regularity of their design meant that they could be broken down easily into their component parts. The latest design for silk embroidery could as easily serve the needs of a silver engraver, as a man who carved mirror frames, or, for that matter, the designer or engraver of trade cards and other print ephemera. Indeed, it is an example of 'other' print ephemera to which we much now turn.

Illustration #6 is a ticket to the Lord Mayor's Banquet at the Guildhall on October 30th, 1727, now lodged with others in the collection of the Guildhall Library.⁴⁸ The design is heavily influenced by the work of Jean Bérain, whose lighter use of the classical grotesque style became increasingly fashionable at the

⁴⁷ The baroque may be characterized as using ample forms animated by movement and an air of lavishness, amongst other things. Certainly in its many manifestations in the decorative arts it can most easily be contrasted with the earlier classical style, that of the renaissance, by an emphasis on the use of rounded forms. Angles still appear, but most commonly softened by the curves of applied scroll work arabesques and acanthus leaves.

⁴⁸ I am deeply indebted to librarian/curator Lynn McNab for bringing this remarkable collection to my attention. They have proved invaluable to the stylistic dating of many of the trade cards discussed in this work.

French court as the ponderous regularity and formality of the baroque began to pale for Louis XIV late in the seventeenth century. It contains many of the visual elements which appear in trade cards of the same date: the vase-shaped fountains in the upper corners; the bandwork, or arabesque work of the crown; the shell motifs, *mascerons*, and garlands of bell-flowers; the sweeping and bending palm fronds which spring from the head-dresses of the caryatid figures near each of the bottom corners; the symmetrical, curly cartouche in which the shield is presented⁴⁹ (another even more common example is at the bottom bearing the words “No Admittance etc.”); and the herms supporting spilling vases on their shoulders. Note the symmetry of the design, recognition of which is a vital point in differentiating Baroque grotesque work from its asymmetrical cousin, the arabesque of the Rococo style.

Two trade cards in the Heal Collection⁵⁰ (one here illustrated: #7) belonged to engravers, and so can be expected to reflect the styles they anticipated would attract trade. Nicholl’s trade card specifically mentions “shop-bills” in the text, perhaps the earliest mention in advertising of this type of promotion. His card is composed of a large and ornate hatched⁵¹ strapwork frame, decorated at the rounded corners by that quintessential Baroque detail, the scrolling acanthus leaf. At the top, and in

⁴⁹ The upper cartouche betrays a lingering fascination with the auricular style, prevalent on the continent from the early seventeenth century onwards. Like the many water symbols used in this ticket, the auricular style turns up again in the cards of the rococo fashion. For greater detail, see chapter five.

⁵⁰ S. Nicholls, BM Heal 59.113; Paul Fourdrinier, BM Heal 59.62. Reference to Table One will indicate that there are, in fact, 190 trade cards belonging to engravers in the Heal Collection alone. Only two were chosen as a representative sample.

⁵¹ The hatching and cross-hatching which appear as a background and filler on many trade cards of this period represent in two dimension the pouncing used by both furniture and silver craftsmen of the period. The roughened background gave added prominence to the carved (in furniture) or *repoussé* (in silver) sculptural elements of the decoration, which, again, is so typical of this style.

each lower corner three cherubs gambol, holding in their hands the instruments of the engraver's craft. Twined round the frame itself, in a curious reminder of a Gothic past, are tendrils of ivy.⁵² Nicholls flourished from 1695 to 1740. The trade card likely dates to sometime mid-way in his career, as the band or strapwork frame is highly reminiscent of the work of Paul Decker the elder, whose book entitled *Groteschgen Werk* was published in 1700.⁵³ Decker was influenced, in turn, by the work of the French designer, Jean Bérain. The cherubs turn up again in the trade card of the well-known engraver, Paul Fourdrinier.⁵⁴ Here they support a small, scrolling and acanthus leaf decorated cartouche, containing his name and trade. Hatching again calls attention to the sculptural figures of the plump little angels, who twist in contorted posture to hold the sign between them. These two cherubs are amongst the most common of Baroque symbols, both in England and on the continent. They frequently hold up a crown, laurel or otherwise, and contrary to popular myth, have nothing whatsoever to do with the restoration of the monarchy to the English throne in 1660; they are an ancient device brought to new purpose, like so many.

⁵² This is not to suggest that Nicholls was deliberately recalling the work of medieval illuminators who filled the margins of their masterpieces with scrolling vines and oak festoons. It was merely a lingering form of decoration which would play an even larger role in the next style.

⁵³ Alain Gruber, ed. *The History of the Decorative Arts: Classicism and the Baroque in Europe* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1996), 127.

⁵⁴ There were at least two Fourdriniers working in the engraving and print market in the eighteenth century, both named Paul. This card, dated in the engraving as 1731, belonged to the elder. Being of Huguenot descent, he was well-poised when he came to London to work with many of the leading artists of the day. The print market in London was thriving, and under those circumstances it is interesting that Fourdrinier chose to promote himself in this method. Clearly, even as an established engraver, he saw the need for and the power of the medium. He appears to have up-dated his card in 1741 in a more complex, classical style.

Note should also be made of the trade card of Ellis Gamble (illustration #8.)⁵⁵ The whole is designed as an ornate shop sign. This resemblance is reinforced by the use of shading, which gives a three-dimensional appearance, and the background, which appears to be the brick wall from which the sign is hung. Of the two symmetrical cartouches⁵⁶ which comprise the frame (or sign) the upper is made of light scroll work. It centres the golden angel, which is Gamble's trade sign. Her foot alights gently upon the curl of the strapwork cartouche which contains Gamble's text. This is altogether heavier in design, and is further distinguished by a grotesque *mascaron* in the centre of the base. The designer of the card was none other than the illustrious William Hogarth, who had served an apprenticeship in silver engraving with Gamble.⁵⁷ It was engraved by A.M Ireland, a well-respected engraver of the period.

This point raises an important issue regarding the engravers of trade cards. Like many craftsmen during the period who prided themselves on their abilities to turn their hands to many forms of work, the illustrious engravers of book plates, maps, and expensive prints after oil paintings, did not balk at the opportunity to design this form of advertising. The point deserves reiterating, because it explains why so many trade cards bear such extraordinarily fine work, not only of execution but of design.⁵⁸ Much the same expertise, if not the time, which went into the

⁵⁵ In the collection of the Guildhall Library. It is printed on heavy paper and measures 6" x 7 3/4", a fairly standard size for the period.

⁵⁶ This is one of the earliest appearances of the double cartouche format.

⁵⁷ Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth, a Life and a World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), 92. Uglow dates this card to 1724., the year Gamble moved to this address.

⁵⁸ This having been said, Hogarth was less than careful when he gave Gamble's angel six fingers. Or perhaps he was simply testing or teasing his former master.

translation of an Italian oil painting into engraved lines on a copper plate went into the design of trade cards. Not only did this ensure the attention of the contemporary consumer, it likely also guaranteed the longevity of the card, since attractive and well-conceived works would likely be kept for their decorative value long after they had served their practical purpose.

It seems at first incongruous to the eye of a trained art historian, that the cartouches on many trade cards of the 1730's become suddenly heavier, more weighted by thick and plastic acanthus leaves and heavily carved 'frames'. In comparison to much of the furniture and silver of the period, which was pared free of almost all ornament, these seem oddly ponderous. John Deacon's trade card is a case in point (Illustration #9)⁵⁹, as is that of Jonathan Jennings, asses milk seller (Illustration #10)⁶⁰. The explanation may lie in the preponderance of design books illustrating the Palladian style. While its promoters, chiefly William Kent and Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington, would have paled at the slight,⁶¹ the Palladian style shares much of its vocabulary with the Baroque, which Palladians criticised as gaudy and tasteless.⁶² Both styles used heavily scrolling strapwork,

⁵⁹ In the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Acc. no. 18856.7). Deacon was a leather-seller in London.. Unfortunately I have been unable to establish his dates. The Jennings card which is illustrated here comes from the Guildhall Library Collection and is one of the earliest examples I found dated as a shop bill, in this case for 1733. Another copy of Jennings's trade card is in the Heal Collection (4.10).

⁶⁰ This trade card was used as a shop bill in 1710. Later copies in various collections date 1736 and 1743, all used as shop bills.

⁶¹ The Baroque style was associated with the Conservative faction which had controlled government through the reign of Queen Anne. George I (1714-1727) espoused the Whig cause. The new style of architecture (etc. - the Palladian) was intended to oppose its predecessor as the Whigs opposed the Tories.

⁶² The Palladian is an altogether more architectural style, less interested in the naturalism which had inspired much English and Dutch sculptural decoration in the preceding period, and more fond of bringing exterior architectural detail inside and to the fore.

acanthus leaves and flower swags, for instance. The Jennings trade card also uses as a background to the cartouche the overlapping circle motif, or fish-scales, which pervades design during this period. The Deacon card features a carved frame similar to those found around mirrors and pictures of the period. By itself, this is a common form of decoration on many plainer cards of the period, but in Deacon's case, the frame is overlaid with scrolling acanthus, with additional bell-flowers dotted symmetrically around the frame. Note that both cards use their shop signs as the focus of the illustration. Again, this is almost without exception during this period. Clearly, shop recognition was still of primary importance in this form of advertising.

Other changes which occur in the same period point to a greater consideration of the possibilities of the medium, as likely by the designer as by the commissioner of the trade card. The greatest and most ubiquitous of these is undoubtedly the change in calligraphic hand. Although it is still possible to find cards dating from the 1730's in a less-than-polished calligraphic hand, for the most part the period is remarkable not only for the quality which suddenly appears in execution of the text lettering, but also in the variety of lettering styles which are used. All of the examples illustrated thus far exhibit two or more lettering styles. Hogarth's design for Ellis Gamble will serve as a case in point (Illustration #8). Here the trader's name is given prominence by both size and the use of a modified round hand. His trade is highlighted in italic roman capitals which are slightly smaller, and the address by a clear, up-right and well-spaced roman hand which is smaller still. The district is indicated by capital letters which are given a wider spacing and slightly different shading; they are almost equal in size to those used

to indicate Gamble's trade. Ancillary information on what the shop carries is given in an elegant round hand, equal in size to the lettering of the address but less bold. Such variety of lettering style is by no means unusual in the print trade during the period. Much earlier than this designers of the title pages of books commonly used such a means of focussing attention on some pieces of information over others, and decades earlier two or more fonts appeared in newspaper advertising. Clearly the adoption of this eye-catching device had been slow in coming to illustrated advertising, but once arrived it continued to evolve for as long as the medium existed.

The very ability of the engraver to produce such polished lettering reflects, not so much of its import to advertising, as the importance of calligraphy in society as a whole. From approximately 1660 through approximately 1740, manuals on penmanship proliferated. The ability to write neatly and with elegance was a skill which both young men and young women were expected to acquire, and lessons at home or at school emphasized this need. With the proliferation of elegant hands in various forms of print, from the titles of art prints to the title-pages of books, it is hardly surprising that both the skill of the engravers and the taste in advertising should run in the same direction. The use of a variety of lettering styles on a single page not only broke up the surface, both tempting the eye and making the text easier to read, but gave the tradesman, or the card designer, the opportunity to focus the attention of the reader on certain pieces of information which were key. The elegant, if slightly less-legible, round hand suggested sophistication, while the roman hand, perhaps the most legible of the lettering styles, ensured that vital information (usually the location of the shop) was immediately clear. In fact, roman

lettering tends to leap off the page in comparison to the looped and scrolled round hand.⁶³

In most cases, lettering style is limited to the hands described above. In rare cases, and I have only one in my selection, black letter is also used. This is the hand often designated as “Gothic”, although the term “black letter” is used in most calligraphic handbooks. It appears in the trade card of Clark and Pine (Illustration #11),⁶⁴ engravers (hardly coincidentally, I feel.) The card is dated at the base “March the 15th Anno Domini 1717.” The illustration, of a cherub holding an exquisitely complex bunch of scrolling acanthus leaves, is secondary to the text, which occupies fully two-thirds of the page. Only the tradesmen’s names, their trade, and the location of the shop are present. Apart from ‘London’, which is in well-spaced Roman capitals, all else but the trade is in a well-spaced round hand with flourishes. The word “Engravers” is equal in size to the names of the traders, but is in bold black letter with complex flourishes over the first and after the last letters. I hardly think that this can be the only use of black letter in a trade card of this period, but inasmuch as it is the exception rather than the rule, I will reserve a lengthy discussion of the use of black letter until the next chapter, when its usage became much more common. I feel confident in suggesting that it makes an appearance in this trade card because much of the engraving done during this period was of forms which required black letter (legal and business, mainly),

⁶³ On the fourteenth of September, 1710, Joseph Addison commented on the methods used by newspaper advertisers to “catch the Reader’s Eye”. One of these was “the blind Italian character, which being scarce legible, always fixes and detains the eye, and gives the curious reader something like the satisfaction of prying into a secret.” (Quoted in Nevett, *Advertising in Britain*, 20.) While this is just the sort of sarcasm Addison revelled in, there is no doubt a grain of truth to his criticism, as anyone who has attempted to read eighteenth century newspapers knows to their cost.

⁶⁴ In the BM Heal Collection: 59.38

especially in the area in which Clark and Pine operated, which was Chancery Lane. Not only did the trade card advise of their existence and location, then, but it assured prospective clients of the quality of their work.

While the Clark and Pine card appears at first glance to continue the practice of including only shop-relevant information in the text of a trade card, they have added a *nota bene* at the bottom of their card: “NB. All manner of Engraving as. History, Heads, Writing, Seals, & Plate.” Indeed, while the majority of early eighteenth century cards included no more information than their antecedents, a few tradesmen by this period had taken the opportunity to present far more information to the prospective consumer. The illustrated trade card produced for Hodsons Looking Glass and Cabinet Warehouse, in Frith Street Soho boasts a “ready made great variety of all sorts of Furniture in the neatest and most Fashionable manner, by choice and experience’d Workmen employ’d in his own house. By which mean Customers may the better depend on the goodness of the materials and duration of the Work. There are also many well contriv’d machines for weak and Sickly people, all performd at moderate prizes. and in the utmost perfection. n.B. Coach, Chair, and Sash Glasses are sold at the very lowest prizes.” The furniture illustrated is typical of that produced around 1730,⁶⁵ which is accordance with the

⁶⁵ Sarah Banks acquired the trade card for her collection in 1786 (in the British Museum, 28.77). It was used as a receipt in that year. The longevity of the design is extraordinary, considering that Hodson boasts of furniture in the “most Fashionable manner” but continues to illustrate furniture which, by 1786, was lamentably unfashionable. I would argue that the choice was a deliberate one. Far from being relegated to the servants’ quarters, as some historians would suggest, old furniture was carefully preserved not only for its intrinsic value, but for the longevity of family connexions such furniture suggested. Such obvious ties to tradition and conservatism which the illustration of this trade card suggest would likely have attracted a well-heeled customer with deep familial roots, one familiar with the designs engraved on the card through many years of family use.

earliest date that Beard and Gilbert assign to the maker, 1723.⁶⁶ This is a long list, indeed, and one which contains several qualifiers (fashionable, goodness, well contrived, utmost perfection, very lowest prices etc.) It might be argued, though never proven, that the text had been changed from the original at some later date. While this may be a possibility, the list itself is not over-long in comparison with several trade cards which can be dated firmly to the years around 1738⁶⁷. The card of Thomas Betts, Glass-cutter at ye King's Arm's Glass-Shop Opposite Pall-Mall Charring Cross, proclaims that he "MAKES & SELLS all Sorts of Curious Cut Glass Such as Cruets, Castors, Salts, Lustres, Cream Bowles with Globes for Lanthorns, Large Salvers or Platees in Flint Glass or Looking Glasses to fit China Diskes or without. LIKEWISE Curious Work in Looking Glasses either Old or New in General. CHEAPER AND BETTER then hitherto has been done. HE BEING THE REAL WORKMAN FOR MANY YEARS." (The use of a different font here indicate that roman lettering has been used rather than the modified round hand of the list.) Here, too, we find qualifiers which urge the consumer to make a comparison between his goods and those of any other tradesman.⁶⁸ Very rarely, the textual lists will be bolstered by illustration of the goods on offer. This was much easier for a cabinet or chair maker than for a mercer! The illustration of goods, while comparatively common on cabinet makers' cards of the period, was still uncommon for tradesmen in other fields. For them, textual lists might be unwieldy but were

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Beard and Christopher Gilbert, ed. Dictionary of English furniture Makers, 1660-1840 (Leeds: Furniture History Society, 1986), 439.

⁶⁷ Mercers were notorious for including long lists of the fashionable fabrics they had in stock. See the cards of Mary and Ann Hogarth, John Whitlock, and Edward Webbe (all Bodleian Library: John Johnson Collection on-line), and Thomas Small (Heal 70.141,).

⁶⁸ Cards like this, with their long and descriptive lists, are invaluable to cultural historians seeking to reconstruct the homes and diets of the fashionable few in early eighteenth century London.

that tradesmen realized that their customers appreciated the attractiveness of trade cards, reminiscent as they were of the prints which decorated the walls so many homes, those of the very rich included. Whatever caught the eye might catch the imagination, and thereby the pocket book. Regardless of the cause for their increased popularity, as the numbers of shop keepers in England burgeoned, so did their sense of competition. So, then, did their need for advertising.

Only two other authors, Sir Ambrose Heal (in 1933) and Dr. Michael Snodin (last in 1986) have turned their attention to the study of trade cards, and both these experts considered the mid-eighteenth century to be the apex of production, both in terms of quantity and quality. My personal experience forces me to agree; this is a period of masterpieces, both in art and in approach to advertising. A wealth of factors melded from c. 1730 to the late 1770's to produce not only a greater need for more thoughtful decorative advertising, but a highly attractive, organic style and a wealth of consummate artists to capitalize on it. It is to the first of these factors, the economic, which we will turn our attention.

Economic Background

Central to the growth and development of the consumer market, and hence advertising, throughout the eighteenth century must be the fact that agriculture underwent significant improvements during the early part of the century. The increase in output, sufficient to allow England to export grain, was a result of the many improvements made to land usage: the adoption of foreign (mainly Dutch) farming practices, and the interest and suggestions of scientific bodies such as the Royal Society. Instead of permanent pasturing of sheep and cattle, field rotation both of crops and pasturing meant greater fertilization of the ground, which in turn produced better crops. Better fodder in the form of turnips and grasses for farm animals meant both fatter and healthier animals and more manure with which to fertilize crops. They also allowed farmers to winter-over their stock which a shortage of food had forced earlier generations to slaughter each

November.¹ Many farmers switched from rye to more productive crops such as wheat and barley, and sowed both winter and spring crops in an effort to avoid the danger of an entire year's income being destroyed by a single bad harvest. Again as a result of scientific interest in agriculture, greater care was taken with the selection of seeds, the preparation of soils, and livestock care.

These agricultural advances came at a time when the population of England increased gently, rather than exponentially, as it did later in the century. The population grew from approximate 5, 100,000 in 1701, to approximately 5,800,000 in 1751. As in the previous period, under these auspicious conditions, the price of basic foodstuffs dropped,² resulting again in surplus income which could be spent on niceties and luxuries, rather than on mere necessities. Much of this was likely spent in a broader range of food purchases than had been previously available, and on more food in general, certainly for the wage-earning and labouring segments of society. But the extra income released by low food prices could be spent on more permanent consumables, as well.

Many parts of England remained almost self-sufficient in terms of food

¹ Sara Paston-Williams, *The Art of Dining: A History of Cooking and Eating* (London: The National Trust, 1993), 204-05. This change also created more meat year-round for a market crying out for greater supplies. The consumption of meat (chiefly beef) grew enormously through the century and created, in turn, demands for new types of serving dishes, greater amounts of cutlery and in many middle class homes, further accoutrements to the art of fine dining. As always, a change in one industry created a ripple effect in those surrounding it. In many instances, as in the silver industry, for instance, the result was greater demand, greater industry, more shops, more competition, and more need for advertising. Certainly, the greater availability of meat to many ranks during the eighteenth century helped in the creation of overall dietary improvements which led through the century to greater fertility and longevity.

² John Rule, *The Vital Century*, 253. "On average prices were around 25 percent lower between 1720 and 1780 than they had been between 1660 and 1680....Large sectors of the population were left with an increased disposable income after paying for their food. The effect was most noticeable in middle-income groups."

production, but London and the growing number of urban centres whose population exceeded 10,000³, depended on food which was, for the most part, brought in from other parts of the country. Many goods, food included, moved by water, either along the coast or by river transport. This method was cheap but slow, and was used principally for the transport of coal, the fuel which fired both home and industry during the eighteenth century. As canals and river transport in general improved (especially in the latter half of the century) the cost of coal dropped, resulting in a similar drop in the cost of industrial goods dependent on that fuel source, for instance, ceramics and glass. Faster methods of transport were required for goods which were more perishable, such as wheat, or which were needed more quickly, such as newspapers and finished goods being delivered by outworkers to merchants. From the late seventeenth century, increasing numbers of turnpike trusts were founded in order to improve the quality of England's roads, and to speed both passengers and goods. The turnpike system operated by charging tolls for the use of the road. These tolls were then (supposedly) used to maintain and improve the safety and passability of the road. Where the high selling prices of the commodities allowed, road transport was favoured. In 1767, Henry Homer wrote that "Everything wears the face of despatch; every article of our produce becomes more valuable; and the hinge upon which all these movements turn is the reformation which has been made in our public roads."⁴ Hindrances to water transport seldom affected road traffic: river transport could operate only

³ By 1700 13 percent of the population of England lived in towns of 10,000 or more. This number had grown to 24 percent by 1800.

⁴ As quoted in John Rule, *The Vital Century*, 249. Rule does not describe Homer's role, nor has a concerted effort brought forward any information on the gentleman, apart from this quote, which is a common one in literature on canal transportation.

during daylight hours until the end of the century; and inland water has an unfortunate habit of freezing in very cold weather, stalling barges until a thaw freed them. Problems there were, highwaymen not the least of them, but contemporary comment leads the reader to believe that road transport was favoured by many in business,⁵ and that the improvements made therein during the first half of the century oiled the wheels of commerce to some degree. The frequent reference in trade cards to despatch to the country makes this obvious.

The maturation of the credit system was also a vital spur to the growth of the domestic market. Indeed, it is difficult to over stress its importance, especially as regards the need for advertising. The use of credit was a commonplace throughout society. It was common for a manufacturer who bought wool from a farmer, for instance, (or from the middleman, the stapler) to pay half the cost immediately, and the other half when the goods were sold (usually within a year). The mercer who bought the finished cloth from the manufacturer did so with credit as well; goods were purchased for the shop with half the purchase in ready money, though the residual was often required after only six months, rather than a year. The mercer's business was most likely founded on a deep substructure of credit which had been extended by merchants and other traders as a form of investment. Other sources including inheritance, or a dowry might help. The short fall was often made up by loans from family members, both close and extended, leaving the future shopkeeper indebted legally as well as morally to the many who had supported his faith in the market. Shopkeepers dealt with their customers in the same way. Credit was necessary not only because few people had ready funds with

⁵ Much depended on location. Some roads were infamously bad, such as those which criss-crossed the Midlands and caused Wedgwood so much grief.

which to make their purchases, but because of a nationwide shortage of specie. Bonds, notes, cheques and book debts were easily extended, and at times, more reliable than coin.⁶ Certainly very few shopkeepers could afford to insist on ready money, though such demands do turn up on trade cards of this period. Trade cards which have been used as invoices not infrequently turn up accounts which extend over a period of years. The mutual trust necessary to motivate this form of commercial transaction was enormous, and as has been pointed out by many historians, quite beyond the bounds that we would consider wise now. In most cases it worked, although shopkeepers, especially, balanced on a horrifyingly thin wire much of the time. The book debts of a prestigious manufacturer or shopkeeper might amount to three or four times the value of the firm's liquid assets; Hunt documents the case of William Stout who, between 1697 and 1705 lost the equivalent of two years' profits (amounting to £220.00) to bad debts from 240 customers.⁷ Clearly, credit could both run and ruin a business. With these burdens in mind, both moral and financial, expenditures on advertising in order to increase trade would likely be regarded as all but necessary in order to ensure the continued growth of paying custom.⁸

It has long since been established that those with the greatest exercised purchasing power during this period were the middling ranks, those individuals

⁶ Margaret R. Hunt, The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England 1680-1780 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996), 30.

⁷ Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England (Kingston: McGill-Queen's, 1989), 9. See also Lorna Weatherill, Consumer Behavior and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760, 2nd Edition (London: Routledge, 1996), 99, 102.

⁸ Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping, 18. "Indeed, eighteenth-century shopkeepers were competing for trade far more vigorously than is generally conceded."

and families whose income ranged from about £50 to £200 per annum. They included the lesser gentry (not the county gentry), those employed in the professions (doctors, senior civil servants, lawyers and the like), merchants, shopkeepers, farmers, yeomen, husbandmen, and craftsmen. According to Lorna Weatherill, roughly half the population of England fell into this category by the middle of the eighteenth century.⁹ Weatherill's study, which is by far the most in-depth and current of its kind, reveals that, in the case of consumer durables (many of which were advertised in trade cards), the middling ranks *led the gentry* in the purchase of consumer durables new to the market. Her study of inventories from 1660-1760 did not include those of the upper gentry or the aristocracy, which is unfortunate. Regardless of the lack of information on the purchases of the upper ten thousand, however, it appears from Weatherill's study that those who were exposed first to new goods and methods, the merchants and traders, were the first to adopt them, and that, then as now, emulation spread *up* as well as down and sideways. To a great extent, it was the increasing sociability of this group, and of the period in general, which encouraged the spread of both goods and styles.

Low food prices, increased transportation, ample credit and increased demand from a burgeoning middle class all provided a basis for an increase in shops of all sorts throughout the nation. The exact rise in the number of shops in London is impossible to measure given the sporadic nature of the statistics which remain from the period. Countless authors refer to it in so cavalier a manner as to suggest that the point is axiomatic. Some estimates suggest that the number of retail establishments in *England* trebled during the first half of the eighteenth

⁹ Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour, 14.

century,¹⁰ and since London was the principal centre for purchase and distribution, the number of her shops would most likely have kept pace with, or exceeded this estimate. In one of the few modern studies on the subject, Mui and Mui used the London Bills of Mortality to provide the number of shops within the parish of Marylebone in the year 1759: 21,603 out of a total of 141,700 in England and Wales as a whole,¹¹ though what that number was before 1759 is not mentioned. That the number of shops did increase is beyond question; it is merely regrettable that more data with which to support this assertion is unavailable. But one factor which is key to their increase has yet to be discussed: the rise of sociability. It was the sociability inherent in all walks of society which spread the fashion for new goods and new pastimes, and new ways of behaving. The opportunities for socializing were legion, and given the importance of socializing to the development of the market in consumer durables, and thence the profusion of shops and advertising, the topic deserves greater development.

Sociability at Large

Many writers on the period have identified the cult of improvement as being characteristic of the age, at least within the ranks of those who had leisure enough to dwell on the nature of 'self' and 'society' and were not required to spend most of their waking hours labouring to feed their families. This desire for improvement

¹⁰ Robert S. Duplessis, Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: University Press, 1977), 193.

¹¹ Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping, 36; John Brewer, The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), 184. Brewer quotes Gregory King's late seventeenth century estimate of shops throughout the nation, although he says that King is "extremely conservative." It remains, nonetheless, the only semi-reliable estimate for this period.

was not limited to the self, but was reflected in every facet of life, from city to garden design, from interior design to tasteful alterations in table manners, amongst many, many others. It involved, as Peter Borsay has it, “a commitment to an endless process of alteration and transformation” and was translated into the greater import of taste, politeness, civility, sociability, sentiment and sensibility.¹² It was believed that such improvements were not only necessary for the better operation of society as a whole, but would give both the individual and society a more profound morality, and hence a greater closeness to God. Then, too, Man is a social animal and the opportunities for social intercourse which proliferated from the 1720’s onwards merely channeled this desire, and applied means for the widespread control and edification which could result from many classes meeting in one place at one time¹³.

Within England’s growing number of cities, modifications undertaken during the eighteenth century (often of necessity as a result of widespread destruction by fire), and developments within emerging urban centres reflected the desire to increase public sociability and civility. Piazzas, squares, parks, walks and gardens and public meeting spaces such as assembly rooms and playhouses were constructed to facilitate and encourage a degree of social intercourse which allowed the mingling of all ranks of the social strata. Their number and popularity grew throughout the century. A love of order and the recognition of the civilising role of

¹² Peter Borsay “The Culture of Improvement,” in *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. Paul Langford (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), 183-212.

¹³ Peter Borsay (“The Culture of Improvement”, 190), points out that social civility was especially necessary in order to heal the wounds created by the Civil Wars and the social and political chaos which ensued thereafter. In order to function effectively on any level, cooperation within society was absolutely vital. The cult of improvement provided assurances for all.

the ancients was reflected in the use of classical precepts for the construction and decoration of many of these. As the first Earl of Shaftesbury believed that one could come to an understanding of truth through the study of beauty, so many later in the eighteenth century believed that virtue could be developed more fully through study of the arts, whether in proper architecture, music, or pictures. The city was the ideal arena for such display and study. And all the while that thinking members of society mused upon the moral lessons taught by fine architecture and interior design, they themselves might be the object of consideration. In an open arena of display, such as Vauxhall Gardens,¹⁴ behaviour and personal adornment were also on display.¹⁵ Thus, just as Vauxhall boasted the latest decoration in the Rococo vein in its supper boxes for the tasteful study and amusement of its clientele, this same clientele provided lessons for the greater improvement of those whose studies were mannerisms, hair styles, and silk patterns.

Under Jonathan Tyer's direction, Vauxhall gardens boasted one of the country's finest collection of British paintings, a medium undervalued by the age until the birth of the Royal Academy.¹⁶ Such galleries for the public viewing of art

¹⁴ Vauxhall Gardens really deserves a chapter to itself, so great was its influence on rococo design. In the 1730's and 1740's it was a major tourist spot, and popular with Londoners throughout the summer. Its proprietor, Jonathan Tyers, hired a group of artists to decorate the garden's pavilions and supper boxes. Eventually Hogarth, Francis Hayman, and even the great Hubert Gravelot became involved, not only in supplying suitable paintings and garden designs, but witty and fashionable designs for tickets, song sheets and medallions. Several cities copied both the idea and the name of the gardens, spreading the new French taste even further afield.

¹⁵ There were roughly sixty pleasure gardens in London during the mid-eighteenth century, most of them imitating the delights of Vauxhall, or its rival, Ranelagh to some degree or another.

¹⁶ David Mannings, "The Visual Art," in *18th Century Britain: The Cambridge Cultural History*, ed. Boris Ford (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 108. Art was meant to improve, and in order to do this, suitable subject matter was thought to be limited to classical or biblical history so as "to represent a critical moment from ancient or biblical history which aimed to edify and instruct." (John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 211.)

were curiously absent from urban development at the time, given the importance with which many influential writers of the period treated the study of art. There were a few private collections of foreign artists, in the main, which would admit discerning individuals, though many of these were not within easy reach of the capital¹⁷. William Hogarth felt keenly the dearth of public display space, and after presenting the Foundling Hospital with a portrait of its founder, Captain Coram, he encouraged other artists to submit paintings, as well. The space proved popular¹⁸ and the Hospital's Court Room was hung with history (and other) paintings by Hogarth, Hayman, and others (amongst them a very young Thomas Gainsborough) which vied for the attention of collectors usually enamoured only of foreign masterpieces. By 1760 the newly formed Society of the Arts was regularly displaying temporary exhibits of English works, attracting audiences which were almost too large and enthusiastic; an unexpected 6,500 people turned out to see the spring exhibit, completely overwhelming the expectations of the organisers.¹⁹ In 1715 Jonathan Richardson complained that if understanding "paintings and drawings were made part of the education of a gentleman....the whole nation would, by these means be removed some degrees higher into the rational state, and make a more considerable figure among the polite nations of the world."²⁰ His essays were reprinted in 1725, 1773 and 1792. Clearly the public were listening. With the importance critics laid on the study of pictures to the benefits of virtuous

¹⁷ John Brewer, The Pleasures of the Imagination, 221.

¹⁸ Mannings, "The Visual Arts," 108.

¹⁹ John Brewer, The Pleasures of the Imagination (Chicago :Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997), 232.

²⁰ The Works of Jonathan Richardson (London, 1773), pp 271-2 as quoted in Peter Borsay, "The Culture of Improvement", 189.

development, could advertisers afford to ignore such a medium?

Sociability at Home

The increased sociability of the middle and upper classes evident outside the home was equally evident within it, and had a marked influence on the demand for wares and services which typically turn up in mid-century trade cards. Two characteristics apparent within the middle class, especially, seem likely to have been at odds with each other and yet to have had the same effect on the market for consumer durables: the need for greater sociability and the need to advertise status. Though at first glance opposites on the social spectrum, sociability and status-seeking could both be displayed within the home in objects and surroundings which reflected the owner's good taste, for good taste spoke not only of education, but an understanding of how fashion worked, a 'savoir faire'. In a controlled and carefully chosen interior the visitor could, and did, reflect on the dignity of the owner, to say nothing of the income necessary to display the new fashions and goods successfully.²¹

From the end of the seventeenth century, changes in attitudes toward interior space ensured that new houses, especially in urban centres, provided increasing numbers of social rooms. The dressing of these rooms not only gave delight to the owners, but advertised their knowledge of current fashion, as well as the tradition from which the family sprang (in the deliberate use of older furnishings), and their ability to finance new purchases. Even in the middle of the

²¹ This subject is developed more fully in the following sources: Woodruff H. Smith, Consumption and the Making of Respectability 1600-1800(New York: Routledge, 2002), 182; Lorna Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour, 191-200.

century, the belief that one could 'read' a room was in evidence, and thus the public rooms of a home were furnished with great care.

Where once (and still, in lesser houses) the principal living room served also as the dining room, a separate room for dining was common by mid-century in the homes of the middling ranks and above. Increasingly, matching sets of chairs were purchased along with a single, large dining table (often mahogany) which replaced the fashion for several small tables. Knives and forks became more common in matched sets, and drinking glasses proliferated as the variety of drinks served with meals increased (and also as the number of glass houses in England grew in answer to consumer demand.) Visiting, dinner parties and the musical evenings which inevitably accompanied them were the most common way for people to spend their non-working hours²², and the proliferation of shops which catered to the needs created by such entertaining attests to this.

Since the late seventeenth century, the drawing room (living room, or parlour) was the principal room for visiting and entertainment. In wealthier homes in the mid-eighteenth century, the library augmented it. A library spoke highly of the owner's education, continued desire for self-improvement, and income, for books were seldom cheap, despite the continued remarkable growth of the used book market. It was, therefore, an important statement of status upon which to lavish income. Bookcases had become increasingly popular since their first appearance in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, but now the volumes they contained could be displayed for the approbation of all in cases with glazed doors. Never inexpensive in themselves, these pieces of furniture boasted the added

²² Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour, 164.

characteristic of being delightfully easy to decorate according to the latest style. Chippendale lavished much attention on this form of furnishing. In wealthier homes, a glazed bookcase might be matched with a glazed display case in which the owner exhibited a similarly precious commodity: foreign, or even English, porcelain.

Although the earliest pieces of porcelain appeared in Europe during the fourteenth century, such pieces were beyond the purses of any but the extraordinarily wealthy. By the early eighteenth century, however, imports from the Orient had increased to the extent that it was not unusual for shopkeepers of even the middling ranks to own comparatively large collections, although comprised almost solely of the common blue and white porcelain imported by the East India Company. Much of this porcelain was imported to provide the necessary accoutrements to the proper taking of tea.

Surely no beverage in the later history of England has had such a widespread effect on domestic life as tea, certainly for the middling and upper ranks of society. Still beyond the reach of the poor²³ (and good tea would remain so until imports began from India in the mid-nineteenth century), tea was, itself, a status symbol,²⁴ denoting not only the owner's ability to afford it, but also to purchase all the silver

²³ Strictly speaking, the labouring poor might have been able to afford tea at this time, but it was very much second hand. After their initial use, the tea leaves from the mistress's table usually went to the housekeeper, who would use them herself, or sell them on to a tea dealer, who would dry them, colour them (often with copperas) and sell them again. They were usually sold under a euphemistic label which at least identified them as less than 'best'.

²⁴ Tea was also widely regarded as a health-giving beverage, one which was especially useful in aiding digestion, hence its use after dinner. The same held true for coffee. As some writers argued it, the consumption of both tea and coffee exhibited self-control and a civilised interest in the care of the body, thereby tying in nicely with the entire ethos of improvement. For more information on this, and on the enormous effect tea drinking had on sugar consumption see Woodruff D. Smith, Consumption and the Making of Respectability 1600-1800 (Routledge: New York and London, 2002), 121-130.

and porcelain necessary to serve the beverage in the expected manner. By the mid-eighteenth century the service of tea was a necessary and fashionable conclusion to dinner. It required a tea pot in either silver or porcelain (which was preferred, being more expensive), a water pot, a milk jug (from about 1730), a sugar basin, a slop bowl, a spoon tray and spoons. Also desirable were a silver table or tray, and a lockable box within which were either lead-lined wells or individual silver tea canisters (one for black and one for green tea) and a sugar canister for the large lumps of crystallized sugar invariably taken with tea. Furniture was designed for the ceremony; a revolving tilt top table allowed the delicate porcelain to be swung round to the reach of the guest without the necessity of lifting it, and matching games and tea tables were made for many a fashionable drawing room. The importance of the ceremony and the value (on many levels) of the wares with which it was served can be measured by the fact that many of the men and women who commissioned group portraits during the period (known contemporarily as conversation pieces) had themselves represented taking tea. It was the apex of sociable and tasteful behaviour, and generated much consumer demand accordingly. Not only tea merchants (who frequently also sold imported porcelain), but toy men (who might sell either porcelain or small pieces of silver) and goldsmiths grew in number to answer burgeoning consumer demand. Given the popularity of cordials²⁵ taken after tea, even the wares of the glassmakers were given a boost in popularity due to the importance of tea.

Indeed, it would be difficult to name a commodity whose production was not

²⁵ Fruit cordials, sometimes known as aqua vitae, were usually made at home by the mistress and her daughters. They were sipped from small-bowled, long-stemmed glasses to enliven the spirits after the too-calming (some said depressing) effects of tea.

in some way influenced by the emphasis on sociability so common within society. Many of these items had been available before the period under discussion; what affected the market was not only the demand which led to their greater availability, but also the style in which many of these items were decorated. This is the subject of the next section.

The Rococo Style

This mid-period of trade card production is, to my mind, a pivotal point in the increasing sophistication of eighteenth century advertising. Though the Baroque style appears gradually in early period trade cards, it is almost used carelessly, as though some decoration was required, but the choice was limited to that which was used in other forms of print media or nothing at all. By mid-period, use of the Rococo style was in most cases a clear choice over several possibilities. Those who abjured fashion, and there were a number, kept rolling along with the Baroque, or made do with something severely plain. The majority of surviving trade cards from 1740-70, however, exhibit a clear decision to follow prevailing fashion, and not for the Palladian (see below), with its relatively recognizable classical motifs, but with a style which was characterized by novelty and imagination. Given the importance of the style it is as well to examine it, and its spread, in some depth.

The first and most vital point to be made is that the Rococo style appears in complete contrast to the other dominant style, the Palladian, both in interior design and in the decorative arts. The Palladian was a classically based style, well-suited to the purses and self-confidence of those wealthier members of society who had made

a Grand Tour, and hence were (supposedly) fully conversant with ancient Greek and Roman precepts of architecture and decoration. That this style was also prevalent in houses and furnishings across the middling and upper social spectrum must be understood if a proper appreciation of the popularity of its opposite, the Rococo, is to be gained. In an oblique way, it dove-tailed well with society's fixation on self-improvement.

Indeed, one of the main reasons that the taste for the fantastical Rococo was so widespread is likely that it was such a contrast to the ordered, heavy and predictable Palladian/Baroque. 'Contrast' was in fact one of the contemporary terms used to label the new style.²⁶ Only in the homes of the very wealthy did the style occupy an entire room, as at Claydon House in Buckinghamshire where chinoiserie runs riot. In most homes, a knowledge and interest in the latest fashion found expression in a chimney piece, the choice of wall-paper, or a set of porcelain figures, for instance. But that soupçon, like the tiny amount of salt in a bowl of broth, gave an added endorsement of the owner's taste, his²⁷ knowledge of styles and how to use them.

The style itself developed very obviously from the Baroque, and reused many of the elements to be found therein. At the end of the seventeenth century, artists and designers such as Antoine Watteau and Gilles-Marie Oppenord lightened the Baroque grotesques which had been so popular from c. 1660, and added elements

²⁶ The term rococo was a pejorative term which first appeared in France at the end of the eighteenth century. Only in the mid-twentieth century was it used in an academic sense. Contemporarily the style carried several names, all of them used with confusion nowadays: *le genre pittoresque*, *le style moderne*, *le style Français* (both terms in English as well), *contraste*, and likely others. The term rococo is a corruption of the French term *rocaille*, which will be explained below.

²⁷ Alas, since the bills were inevitably settled by the man of the house, we have little record (to date) of the part women played in the decorating of the average home, widows and spinsters excepted.

like attenuated 'C' and 'S' scrolls, to create a style which seems light, airy, and constantly at play. The full development into *le genre pittoresque* (the Rococo), came early in the eighteenth century, when asymmetry (sometimes extreme) was added together with rocaille, or what Michael Snodin describes as "a protean rock-like watery and shelly substance"²⁸. Asymmetry can easily be recognized because it simply does not exist outside this style. Rocaille is a trifle more difficult to identify. At times it resembles the curling, undulating edge of an oyster shell, while at others it resembles craggy rocks; the naturalness, and the undulating and unpredictable lines of both were what mesmerized artists and designers. Study of the illustrations is the best tool to aid recognition. In most cases in print design, both asymmetry and rocaille work turn up in frames or cartouches, whereas in three-dimensional objects, of which there were legion varieties during the period, both features dominate the objects themselves.

Beneath the Rococo umbrella lurked two similarly fantastical styles: the chinoiserie already referred to in relation to Claydon Park; and the Gothick. Of the latter, very little is seen in trade cards, and for that reason little space will be devoted to it here. Suffice to say that, as a novel style, and one with truly English, nationalistic roots (it was thought, quite mistakenly, of course), the style gathered some adherents during the mid-century, not the least of whom (in his own estimation) was Horace Walpole. His home at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham was a monument to the style, and was much-visited over the thirty years it took him to

²⁸ Michael Snodin, "English Rococo and its Continental Origins," in *Rococo, Art and Design in Hogarth's England*, ed. by Michael Snodin (London: Trefoil Books and the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984), 27.

complete it²⁹. Chippendale further stoked the artistic fire by including many objects in the Gothick vein in his first and second editions (1754 and 1755³⁰) of *The Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director*, though he was scarcely the only furniture designer working in the style. In ceramic (mainly porcelain) decoration, the style appears but infrequently. In many cases in both interior design and in the design of the three dimensional arts, the Gothick often combined incongruously (and confusingly to the unprepared eye) with chinoiserie, which was infinitely broader in its appeal.³¹

Unlike the Gothick, Rococo chinoiserie was first introduced into interiors in France, appearing earliest in the works of Antoine Watteau.³² Charmingly, and with no attempt at verisimilitude, Watteau and artists like him combined the favourite *fête galante* with scenes of Chinese mandarins, contorted flora, and weird

²⁹ I was informed during a tour through the house, which is now part of a teacher training college, that so incessant were the crowds, that Walpole happily moved into a (very classical) house across the road in order to preserve some semblance of privacy, but returned daily to conduct tours of his 'Gothick pile' himself.

³⁰ By his last edition of the work in 1762 virtually all the pieces in this style had been removed, replaced by the antique, what we would recognize as the neo-classical--the subject of the next chapter.

³¹ I suspect, but cannot prove, that the Gothic was perceived as being more masculine in appeal than chinoiserie. It turns up most frequently in dining room and library furnishings.. Chinoiserie, if it turns up in only one room, will be used in the lady's bedroom. It is very tempting to suggest that the Gothic was abjured in favour of the more feminine chinoiserie, or frankly Rococo, because it appealed more to the gender which was doing most of the shopping and buying, but the parameters of this thesis are already strained without adding that problem to the mix.

³² The first appearance of chinoiserie dates from the late seventeenth century in England. It has much of the fantastic in common with its eighteenth century child, though the child is much more elegant and better designed than its seventeenth century parent. Indeed, as a style chinoiserie seems frequently to disappear beneath the surface of popular English design, only to resurface again several decades later. There is a re-birth of chinoiserie at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in part thanks to the eclectic tastes of the Prince of Wales/Regent, and the same fantastic orientalism pops up again in Japonisme which appeared as an off-shoot of the Aesthetic Movement in the 1860's.

and wonderful fauna. Watteau's *Figures Chinoiseries et Tatares* was engraved by Boucher in 1731 and helped spread the fashion throughout Europe, as did the later work of Jean-Baptiste Pillement. A Frenchman by birth, Pillement travelled widely throughout Europe and worked in virtually every major city.³³ He was in London between 1755 and 1760 and there published prints in the Chinese style. Indeed, he was producing new material in a similar vein up to 1774, which indicates the longevity of the style's popularity. Judging from remarks made by Horace Walpole³⁴, however, the English prided themselves on producing their own, innovative chinoiserie designs. In this niche, the work of Henry Copland and Matthias (also called Matthew) Locke excels over that of most of their fellow artists. Although neither one limited his invention to the chinoiserie fad, their 1752 publication *A New Book of Ornaments in the Chinese Taste* provided practical designs for application to a wide variety of decorative pieces, from mirror frames to silver engraving. Similarly influential was *A New Book of Chinese Designs Calculated to Improve the Present Taste* by Mathias Darly (engraver of illustrations 12, 18, and 21) and George Edwards. While all four names are associated principally with design (the first two may well have provided designs for Chippendale's *Director* as well as doing many of the engravings), all four are also recorded as engravers (and likely designers) of a multitude of trade cards during the period.

Like their French peers, no English designer appears to have attempted verisimilitude in his renderings of life in the Orient. It must be remembered that

³³ Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie* (London: Phaidon, 1993), 78.

³⁴ Jacobson, *Chinoiserie*, 126: Walpole wrote anonymously to *The World* in 1751 "Our Chinese ornaments are not only of our own manufacture, Like our French silks....but, what has seldom been attributed to the English, of our own invention."

this is meant to be an exotic and fantastical style. It was meant to imbue the object, whether chair, wallpaper, or trade card, with an air of novelty. Hence, readers unaccustomed to the English form of pagoda, which to my eye resembles in its delicacy and improbable shape an upended columbine flower, might be nonplused by its appearance, especially since so many ladies and gentlemen appear to sport miniature versions of pagodas on their heads. Almost inevitably, objects, architecture and people are completely out of proportion to each other: monstrous, man-eating-like peonies loom over the backs of careless fishermen, and fearsome dragons perch atop the spindly columns of a delicate garden walk. More will be said of the vocabulary as the illustrations are discussed in depth later in the chapter, but the point which must be stressed for this thesis is that this was a novel and fashionable style, like the Rococo in general, and one in which collectors could tastefully dabble for the sake of its unusual prettiness. Use of the style, in whatever form, denoted an ability to react sensitively to fashion, then, rather than a conservatively slavish devotion to the more fundamental and widespread classical designs of the Palladian school.

An understanding of the style's promotion in England is key to the development of the fashion in trade cards. Several pattern books have been mentioned already, and these are only a few of the many which were published in England and on the continent during the eighteenth century. Indeed, there was "a dramatic increase in the use of two-dimensional paper plans for subsequent three-dimensional execution."³⁵ Many of these designs were trade specific, such as

³⁵ John Styles, "Manufacturing, Consumption and Design in Eighteenth Century England," in Consumption and the World of Goods, etc. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1993), 544.

Thomas Johnson's "Twelve Girandoles", but to imaginative craftsmen the original purpose would be of little importance. One of the beauties of the Rococo style was that its elements could so easily be broken apart and reassembled in whatever shape was required.³⁶ One quick glance at Chippendale's designs for mirror frames (see Illustration 12) will astonish the viewer with their similarity to mid-eighteenth century trade card frames. Very little adaptation from one to the other would be necessary. If this smacks of plagiarism, it is. Although many artists and engravers signed their work, thus protecting it with copyright,³⁷ this was difficult to enforce. The reader can easily imagine a shopkeeper wandering into his printer/engraver's shop with a rival's trade card and saying "Do me something like this." Nothing could be more simple. Indeed, judging from the similarities of many trade cards, this must have been a great time and money saver for many shopkeepers and engravers.

While many of the legion pattern books available in London were French, both government and artists were allied during the period in the encouragement of the development and publication of English designs. The Anti-Gallican Society was formed in 1745, with the specific ideal of promoting English commodities and designs to the detriment of French imports. Many artists during the period took membership, Thomas Johnson among them, whether or not they had embraced the

³⁶ Hence the criticism voiced by *The World* as noted above.

³⁷ David Bindman, *Hogarth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), 62. An Act to protect the copyright of engravers became law on the 25th of June, 1735. It later became known as 'Hogarth's Act' because of the role he played in its passage. Piracy of his enormously popular works by the printing presses of Grub Street continually robbed him of profits. Hogarth had greater success in protecting his works than did most trade card designers. Copyrighted designs appear with the words "Published as the Act directs..." or "Published according to the Act of Parliament..." with the publisher's name and address, together with an exact date, at the base of the trade card.

new French style. The work of French Protestant artists who had fled to England was beyond reproach, and presumably the adoption of a French style by artists supposedly promoting English work was excused as a form of necessary competition in the marketplace. Undoubtedly the same blind eye would have been turned to the many English artists and designers who openly poached French designs, then called them their own. No one, it seems, denied Voltaire's assertion that France was 'the whipped cream of Europe'; with that in mind, in order to heighten the possibility of real commercial competition in Europe and to limit the amount of English cash which crossed to enrich French coffers, the Anti-Gallicans merely accepted that those who could not be beaten at their own game might as well be joined in it, hence the spread of the 'modern style' (what we know as the Rococo) within this branch of the artistic community, as within virtually all others.

Like the proliferation of pattern books and decorative prints, the influx of foreign workmen to England, and to London especially, from the end of the seventeenth century onwards had a dramatic effect on the adoption of the Rococo. While the first Huguenot craftsmen arrived in England fleeing the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, their nieces and nephews were drawn to England (and chiefly London) in part by their extended family now resident there, but also by the burgeoning market for their skills which England offered. Certainly there was aristocracy aplenty in France, but that country, in common with many on the continent, lacked the middling ranks who were doing so much of the spending on luxury goods during this period. These later Huguenot designers and craftsmen had first-hand experience of the birth and development of the new style and spread it rapidly amongst the artistic community in London, both native and foreign.

Coincidentally, perhaps, but most definitely conveniently, one of London's earliest, and by now its best known arts academy was situated in Soho, the area in which most Huguenots made their home. The St. Martin's Lane Academy had been founded in 1735, principally as an academy to teach life drawing. Many of those associated with the school, amongst them William Hogarth, Francis Hayman, Hubert Gravelot (recently arrived from France), George Moser (a Swiss chaser) and Louis François Roubiliac, were amongst the upper echelons of the artistic world, and Hogarth, Gravelot and Moser, especially, both designed and executed engravings. At the end of St. Martin's Lane stood Slaughter's Coffee House,³⁸ which became the regular off-hours haunt of many of the students and teachers of the Academy, together, we can imagine, with many of the craftsmen working in the area.³⁹ Though it is only speculation, it seems logical to suggest that in such a convivial atmosphere the latest changes to fashion and art would be discussed and innovations, perhaps, bandied about. Certainly, Snodin identifies the entire St. Martin's Lane area as "the centre of Rococo production in England"⁴⁰ An artist could scarcely keep an idea to himself in such a busy area, and the charms and monetary possibilities offered by the new style must have been widely visible to craftsmen in many media, making the popularity of this area a principal reason for

³⁸ Patricia Crown, "British Rococo as Social and Political Style," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 23, no. 3 (Spring 1990):278.

³⁹ Interestingly, Chippendale owned numbers 60, 61 and 62 St. Martin's Lane---his shop front occupied number 61 and his factory, as it were, the interior court yards---and would likely also have frequented Old Slaughters. Down the street were the offices of Ince and Mayhew, arguably the best known furniture makers contemporarily, and those regularly chosen by the royal family to execute its commissions. This notion of the association of the Academy with Old Slaughters was first put forward by Mark Girouard. For more on this point see Michael Snodin, *Rococo Art and Design*, 31.

⁴⁰ Michael Snodin, *Rococo Art and Design*, n18, 322.

the spread of the Rococo style.

The Effect of the London Print Market

Lastly, mention must be made of the growing market for decorative prints in England, as I firmly believe that this had a marked influence on the popularity of trade cards mid-century. Collectors in the eighteenth century did not despise decorative prints in the way collectors of the twenty-first century do. To our eyes, prints are mere copies of an original, but to eighteenth century eyes they were often superior renderings to those which were readily available on the London market: poorly conceived and ill-painted daubs in oils of inferior artists.⁴¹ At the beginning of the eighteenth century the strongest market was for the work of foreign artists, as noted above; as many as 50,000 paintings and half a million etchings and engravings were imported into Britain from Italy, France and Holland from 1720 to 1770⁴². The drive for self-improvement (and status) created a keen market for the high quality paintings, but the few which were available invariably made their way quickly into the private collections of the aristocracy, either through private purchase abroad, through London auction, or, more likely, through one of innumerable dealers. How, then, would those below such lofty heights be able to indulge their taste and connoisseurship for fine art? Certainly, as previously discussed, there were very few public places in which to study the masters; the public exhibition of works of art belongs more to the period after 1770. The answer lies in the trade in prints, which grew enormously in London from the beginning of

⁴¹ Timothy Clayton, The English Print 1688-1802 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), 3.

⁴² Brewer, Pleasures of the Imagination, 203.

the eighteenth century. They had much to recommend them; they were light weight and easy to transport in number, just as they were easy to produce in number. With the improvements in technique developed by the French at the end of the seventeenth century, high quality prints were also understood by the connoisseur to be close reflections of the skill of the original artist in oils. They could, therefore, teach, and were recognized as important disseminators of taste. As the market for this relatively inexpensive form of art grew the suppliers developed new methods of answering demand. Like books, prints might be published (and frequently were) by subscription, a method much favoured by William Hogarth. Print shops (concentrated around the Covent Garden area, as were many of the better engravers) produced catalogues for prospective customers at home or abroad to peruse, and the publication of new print series were regularly advertised in newspapers. Shops grew in size and number; both Bowles and Overton were large enough by 1750 to do a booming trade supplying prints to county printsellers and to buyers overseas as well. Increasingly the subject matter of these prints developed from reproductions of classical works to more pedestrian subjects of a sort which would appeal to a broader market. This was to be found increasingly within the middling ranks who sought a tasteful, decorative, method of improving both themselves and their homes. Decorative prints were not only collected in folios for study, but were mounted either framed or unframed on the wall. They might even be trimmed and pasted to the wall itself, forming a decorative arrangement with a particular theme: roses, perhaps, or great houses in England. Into this bracket fall many of Hogarth's most popular works: *The Harlot's Progress*; *The Rakes Progress*; *Idleness and Industry*, and others. They could be left in the original form, or even hand-

coloured.

With the increased popularity of decorative prints, it is scarcely surprising that prospective advertisers would recognize the appeal of illustrated advertising. In addition, of course, the growing print and engraving trade in London meant that there were many more skilled engravers at work, and needing work. The increased demand for decorative prints (and books and newspapers) also spurred on the production of paper in England, lowering prices and offering qualities and quantities of stock which had previously been available only from the continent (see chapter three). On every level, then, the market was primed for the production and reception of extraordinary examples of illustrated advertising: the few that remain for study do not disappoint.

Mid-Period Lettering Styles.

The lettering of the early period trade cards as discussed in chapter three was frequently unpolished in form and unimaginative in style. The more elegant and adept hand which characterizes most engraved and etched trade cards from this point forward is the result of a specialization within the trade;⁴³ by this point the lettering on the plate (regardless of whether it was a decorative print, a map, a book illustration or a trade card) was usually added by a specialist writing-engraver, who might himself be copying the hand of a specialist calligrapher hired for the purpose of producing a more elegant hand than the designer of the

⁴³ A trend toward specialization was occurring during this period in many trades in an effort to stream-line production in order to lower costs (not quality!)

illustration could manage.⁴⁴ It was a small added cost to the advertiser, but one which was obviously worth the expense since it produced a polished looking card, more in keeping aesthetically with the smoothly flowing lines of the accompanying illustration.

The most common lettering style used was one balanced somewhere between the Italian and the English round hand, sometimes worked with equal pressure on the graver and sometimes with a greater use of hair-lines.⁴⁵ The preference was obviously that of the designer, since the effect is much the same. Overall, the angle of the writing is moderate, in keeping with the style now known as the 'italic', although more acute angles are sometimes found. Such extremes hinder readability, however, and while it seems that in some instances this was not always uppermost in the mind of the designer, the lettering on most trade cards is perfectly legible.⁴⁶ The Roman hand was still used extensively, as in the early period, to highlight certain pieces of information over others. At times, as in the trade card of Jos. Pitcher⁴⁷ (illustration #13) the Roman is combined with features of the English

⁴⁴ Clayton, The English Print, 21.

⁴⁵ This modified roundhand was widely recognized as the commercial hand, being extremely legible, and was the variety most popular in the numerous books on penmanship still published during this period.

⁴⁶ Some trade cards are so crammed with information that they are virtually illegible, especially when a second or third language has been added. Other cards are illegible because the plate was over-used by the time this impression was created and the sharp lines first created by the engraver/etcher were rubbed smooth and no longer print clearly and sharply.

⁴⁷ BM Heal, no number. The engraving is dated 1764 above the headless (or good!) woman. Directories show him at this address from 1768-77.

round hand,⁴⁸ with flourishes or swashes (sometimes much more extreme than here.) This commonly occurs both to highlight the place name (invariably London in this study), and also the trade of the shopkeeper.

The alternative lettering style for both these pieces of information is the Gothic or black letter as used in the trade cards of Robert Jefferson⁴⁹ and Robert Clee⁵⁰ (illustration #14 and #15). Black letter had never died out entirely in popularity. It was used most frequently for the opening words or phrases of legal documents or notices in order to give added import to the words by the invocation of tradition and more bold, black (or occasionally red, but never in trade cards) ink. As a lettering style, it appears infrequently on early cards, but is common by mid-period. As with its legal usage, black letter in trade cards was used to denote the significance of the words so highlighted, hence its use to off-set “London” in so many cards. Its use cannot be used as a method of dating during this period or after, any more than the use of the italic roman in the same manner, though it must be said that this hand dies gradually in popularity toward the end of the century.

All that can be said, and will be said frequently throughout this work, is that the

⁴⁸ A complete study of English penmanship can be made in the facsimile edition of George Bickham’s 1743 The Universal Penman (New York, Dover, 1968) which illustrates every known lettering style used in trade cards of this era.

⁴⁹ BM Heal 18.76. The only marginal dating possible for this card is through the engraver, M. Darly, who was active from 1750-58.

⁵⁰ BM Heal 59.34. Clee was active from 1742-69 in London... He designed several of the more remarkable cards in the Heal collection, beside which his own is fairly plain. Timothy Clayton (The English Print, 143) says Clee was an “engraver and picture-dealer”. He does not seem to have been noticed by the editors of the various London trade directories, nor did he seek them out. The only mention I have found for him was in the Universal Director of 1763 (the complete title of which is The Universal Director; or, the Nobleman and Gentleman’s True Guide to the Master and Professors of the Liberal and Polite Arts and Sciences; and of the Mechanic Arts, Manufactures and Trades. Est. in London and Westminster and their Environs. 1763.

Mortimer, Thomas, London. Printed by J. Coote.)

number of lettering styles increased as the century ran its course; the more unusual the style, and the more styles used in the same card, the more likely the card is to be from later in the century, or to belong to the next.

Two anomalies should be pointed out for the benefit of those new to eighteenth century lettering: the use of the cursive 'S'; and the appearance of the lower case, roundhand 'w'. The former appears throughout the eighteenth century; while its use diminished from the second half of the century onwards, especially in typeface, it does not disappear entirely from engravings until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. With that in mind, dating trade cards by the presence, or absence, of the cursive 'S' is obviously problematic. The lower case 'w' is equally problematic, though not necessarily from the point of view of dating. It can be seen best in the trade card of Edward Clarke⁵¹ (illustration #16). In this case the subconscious substitutes the correct 'w' in Edward for what in other circumstances would appear to be an 'n', simply because it is the letter one knows by training fits most logically. Careful study will make this obvious. A similar problem has not occurred further down in the text; the sixth line is written in the Italian (or italic) hand, with an open, rather than a closed, 'w'. Nothing but logic and experience will help the student tell the difference, but care must be taken in instances where some doubt arises as to which letter is intended. The problem recurs wherever roundhand is used, regardless of period. The most that can be said is that roundhand became less popular as a lettering style toward the end of the century, but it would be mistake to think that it disappears altogether.

⁵¹ Museum of London collection; also BM Heal 37.16. Various directories list Clarke on Ludgate Hill from 1767-1790, although the street number changed in 1771. The Museum of London card used here is dated on the reverse "11 Apr. 1760." The Heal card is dated on reverse "1775", which indicates the longevity of the design.

What is obvious from most mid and late period trade cards is that trade card designers, and likely the shopkeepers who employed them, had a keen sense of the relation of letter size to importance. In most trade cards, therefore, the name of the shopkeeper (which is the commodity which is really being advertised) is the largest set of words on the page, in a clear, distinctive hand---usually round hand with minimal flourishes, sometimes roman (as with William Guest⁵², frontispiece), and very rarely black letter. Most often the name appears first on the card, above all other information, although this rule is not invariable (see again, William Guest card.) Black letter, usually with flourishes, is used most often to dignify 'London', although throughout the period (and rarely after it, making it a somewhat useful dating point), a most attractive italic combination of roman and round hand with fairly sedate, looping flourishes is used, as in Jos. Pitcher's trade card, already referred to (illustration 13) The size of the place name is most commonly as large, if not larger than the trade of the shopkeeper, and it is usually offset with greater space around it, or decorative flourishes or swashes to draw the eye. The same treatment had occurred occasionally in earlier trade cards, but was by no means common. Throughout the middle of the period giving increased importance to the city of origin was the rule rather than the exception, and the reasons for this are several. As transportation throughout the country improved, as more people travelled to London for business, pleasure, or shopping, and as the London shops advertised their existence and wares further afield--- in other words, as London wares were sent further and further abroad, designation of the city of origin was

⁵² Museum of London collection, 8" x 11" on heavy paper. Dated as invoice on reverse, 1757. Nothing is known of the advertiser. Asses milk sellers, like nightmen and chimney sweeps, appear with lamentable infrequency in trade directories, regardless of the individual worth of their trade, which must have been significant in Guest's case, given the beauty of his trade card.

increasingly necessary. The off-setting “London” on a trade card by size, spacing, and lettering may have been meant to reinforce the idea in the consumer’s mind that fashionable goods came from the metropolis. It also avoided any confusion with local provincial shops, which were likewise growing in number throughout the period, and also using trade card advertising. The common use of the traditional and conservative black letter for styling the place name added even greater importance and dignity to the name, as noted above.⁵³

The sizing of the rest of the text was much dependent on how much the shopkeeper intended to cram onto the page. In instances such as Ryall and Withy’s⁵⁴ card (illustration #17) the booksellers have decided to include not only a list of their goods, but also an assurance of their reliability (discussed below). The importance of the information is in direct relation to the size of the lettering and the amount of spacing allotted between the letters. Such a sophistication as this separates most mid-period trade cards from those produced by earlier in the century, and certainly assures the reader that by c. 1740 greater thought was being put into making this type of advertising as efficacious as possible. The need for advertising has already been established, but it bears repeating. In a highly competitive marketplace, differentiating your shop from those of your rivals was one of the keys to your survival; variation in lettering styles and letter size were developed sophistications which helped draw the attention of the consumer to the

⁵³ It must be noted here that this also reflects current usage in other forms of print media, such as on the title pages of books.

⁵⁴ BM Heal 17.135. In his notes Sir Ambrose Heal dated the card of John Ryall and Robert Withy as c. 1755. Apart from occasional mention of publications to which they were party, no mention of these traders has been found and no more exact date has been attempted.

information the advertiser thought most pertinent.⁵⁵ Even more than the changes made to the illustrations themselves (see below), the changes evident in trade card lettering design from first period to second indicate that approaches in and attitudes toward advertising were growing as rapidly as the commercial sector it supported.

Mid-Period Text

Just as improvements were made to the styling of trade card lettering, so substantial changes took place between the early and mid-periods in the variety and amount of text presented. The reader will recall that, while a short description of goods was used in a few trade cards before c. 1740, most cards were characterized by a text describing the shop sign and the location of the shop alone. In most cases this description did not include the name of the city,⁵⁶ likely because the reach of a shopkeeper's business simply did not warrant it. At some point between c.1730 and 1740 shopkeepers quite obviously realized that they were under-utilizing the medium; or to look at it another way, increased competition drove them to find new and more practical means to attract trade. They merely enhanced an existing

⁵⁵ Those readers conversant with eighteenth century book design will have realized that the title pages of books, especially, had long since used different sizes and styles of lettering for the same purpose. The fact that shop keepers or trade card designers tarried in adopting this method of presentation does not detract from the central argument that they eventually adopted this more sophisticated mode of presentation as a deliberate means of catching the consumer's eye, his imagination, and the contents of his purse.

⁵⁶ This likely indicates that the trade card was restricted in its use to London itself, and would be useful only to those consumers who already knew their way around the city and who would be able to recognize the landmarks pointed out within the text.

medium by including more information on their trade cards⁵⁷.

The first and most obvious inclusion was of lists of goods. This is especially important mid-period because shopkeepers often branched out into the sale of disparate goods in order to attract a broader range of customer. Thus, Edward Clarke, tea dealer, (illustration #16) points out to his perspective customers that, in addition to “all Sorts of Fine Teas” he offers “China and Glass Cut and Flower’d, as well as Plain. Likewise India Fans and Lacquer’d Ware etc. etc.” John Oliver⁵⁸, coffin-plate chaser (illustration #18) advertises the full range of metals possible for use in his medium, vis. “Copper, Brass, Pewter, Lead, or Tin”, assuring his customers thereby that, while his chinoiserie trade card might indicate that his appeal was strictly to the fashionable and well-heeled, he worked with base and less expensive metals for those whose purses were less deep.⁵⁹ Upholders and mercers were amongst those who most often over-crowded their cards, though owners of Italian Warehouses (of which there were several in London at the time) likewise tended to overburden their cards with lists of goods they hoped would attract custom, to say nothing of advertising the shopkeeper’s dependability and the size of the shop. Mindful that advertising might be considered boasting, lists such as

⁵⁷ It bears repeating, that not all extant trade cards datable to this period reflect these sophistications. Some shopkeepers chose simply to reuse existing plates without making any fashionable changes, or ordered archaic forms of design because they knew they had achieved a certain recognition within the community using this form over the years. If the latter be true, such thought processes themselves reflect a more concentrated effort to communicate subliminally with the consumer. In other words, there is a message being imparted beyond that which is made immediately obvious by the illustration and the text.

⁵⁸ BM Heal 124.56. The card was designed by I. Rousset ; M. Darly engraved it. Oliver is listed in Kent’s Directory at this address from 1779 to 1783.

⁵⁹ It must be remembered, however, that many middle and upper class homes used base metal goods for kitchen and even common use.

these were beneficial for their *informative* value. They are often headed by such performative verbs as ‘inform’, ‘announce’, and ‘acquaint’.⁶⁰ Such lists are informative for the social historian, as well, in that they demonstrate not only what was available for purchase in mid-century London, but what was popular, as well.

Increasingly common in trade cards mid-century are the words “Wholesale and Retail” often appended with “at the (or “ye”, which is still in common use) Lowest Prices”, and some comment must be made on this. One of the beauties of the English commercial system (if its mid-eighteenth century state could be dignified by the term) was that there were shops available to every rank of consumer, from the labouring poor upwards. As Mui and Mui point out constantly throughout their work, the smaller shops in London and other urban centres were not only numerous but were vital links in the chain of distribution⁶¹ and probably far out-numbered the shops wealthy enough to be able to use the sort of trade card advertising under examination here⁶². These smaller shops were dependent on larger ones, such as Edward Clarke’s, for the small parcels of tea, the short bolts of fabric etc. which they sold to the labouring classes. These small purchases for resale could be made from larger dealers, and the inclusion of the word “wholesale” indicates just how important these small sales were to those who could afford to use trade card advertising. Note that the words on the Clarke trade card are offset through use of bold, roman lettering and a large flourish or swash. Such treatment is common,

⁶⁰ Sabine Gieseinger, The History of Advertising Language: The Advertisements in The Times from 1788 to 1996 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2001) 205. The reader will note the similarity of approach in both forms of advertising.

⁶¹ Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping, 106.

⁶² Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping, 116

though by no means invariable.

The words "for exportation" also occur frequently (though not invariably) at the base of trade cards produced from mid-century onwards. This might well indicate that the shopkeeper could supply in large amounts, and with a degree of dispatch,⁶³ which is sometimes added separately, and would be a useful piece of information not only for the traveller or merchant heading abroad, but for the customer in the colonies into whose hands the trade card was delivered. As the numbers of Britons emigrating to the colonies increased, so did their ties with their homeland. Not all who fled England did so because they could no longer hope for work or even food in the land of their birth, though there were many who fled to the colonies for just such reasons; many left for the greater business opportunities offered in the colonies, and obviously wished to recreate England in the new world. Similarly, though closer to home, the words "All orders from Gentlemen and tradesmen in the country will be punctually observed", and such, indicate that the shopkeeper was anxious to avail himself of the greater opportunities for national trade which opened as a result of the improvements being steadily undertaken to the nations internal shipping networks.

More interesting still are the words "at Reasonable Rates" which occur on the majority of mid-century trade cards sampled for this study. It must be remembered that few businesses advertised the prices of their goods, or even marked them on the goods in the shop. Such had been the case since the earliest days of fixed shops, and was undoubtedly a hold-over from the days when most goods were either peddled or sold from market stalls, where haggling was *de rigueur*.

⁶³ There are indications that shopkeepers also undertook to package and deliver to the docks goods for exportation: see Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopping, 224.

It was expected that customers would haggle. The assurance that the prices were reasonable to begin with might well be a warning that only a certain amount of leeway in pricing was going to be allowed. It is equally likely to have served another purpose, however. Mui and Mui point out that much trade was done by post between servants and shopkeepers, often the former in the country and the latter in an urban environment. Inasmuch as trade cards were often used as invoices and sent with goods dispatched by order to the country, the words “at reasonable prices”, or their alternative, stronger version which is also common “At the Lowest Prices” (see the Ryall and Withy card, illustration #17) might assure the master (or his servant) that his affairs had been handled carefully, regardless of the lack of haggling which this method of purchase necessitated. It is equally likely that the words clearly indicate the jockeying for position taking place within the trading community itself; increasing numbers of shops selling the same sort of commodities forced shopkeepers to find promises with which to lure customers in. The promise of low prices rarely fails, even now.

The use of adjectives and qualifiers also differentiates early period trade cards from those produced mid-century. The aforementioned promise of the ‘lowest’ prices is simply the most evident, but a quick perusal of only a few cards turns up such phrases as: “the best and newest Fashion” (see John Oliver’s trade card, illustration #18); “the Newest and Genteelest Tastes⁶⁴”; “in the best manner⁶⁵”;

⁶⁴ John Platt, cabinetmaker, BM, Heal Collection, 28.175.

⁶⁵ Godfrey Scholey, butcher, BM Heal Collection, 26.14

“the utmost value given⁶⁶ ”; “in the best and cheapest manner⁶⁷ ”; “the choicest of Goods at as Moderate Prices as any where in London⁶⁸ ”; and so forth. The use of comparative terms and fulsome adjectives indicates, first, that the heightened competition between shopkeepers forced them to use rhetoric rather than, for instance, merely display, or word of mouth to inform the public⁶⁹; and second, that many shopkeepers knew which qualities most appealed to the shop’s customers. A comparison between early and mid-period trade cards, then, indicates that the nature of advertising changed as the consumer society which engendered it changed. No longer was the simple message of location enough. The central message of the trade card (you can buy this here) was augmented by subliminal messages which described both the taste and care with which the shopkeeper tended his customers.

Lastly, a word must be said on the inclusion of street numbers in mid-period trade card texts. Although early in the century an attempt to number houses was made in the area of Goodman’s Fields,⁷⁰ the logic of the process failed to spread itself to other parts of the city until 1762. By this point the streets of London were the subject of widespread horror, not only due to the execrable state of the roads themselves, but from what was perceived to be a chronic and dangerous lack of air

⁶⁶ Richard Boulton, goldsmith and jeweller, BM Heal Collection 67.15

⁶⁷ H. Hawkins, Glassgrinder and Framer Maker, BM Heal Collection 66.32.

⁶⁸ Charles Lacey, bootmaker, BM Heal Collection, 18.84

⁶⁹ A promise that the shopkeeper carries the newest fashions presupposes him to be a man of taste who recognizes the newest fashions when they are offered to him by his suppliers. This is yet another step into the realm of subliminal advertising.

⁷⁰ Charles W.F. Goss, The London Directories 1677-1855: A Bibliography with Notes on Their Origin and Development (London, Denis Archer, 1932) 8.

circulation caused by the numerous, large, and ornate shop signs which swung dangerously above, and which, it was feared, occasioned widespread illhealth⁷¹. The Paving Act of 1762 not only took care of the state of the roads, but made the hanging of signs illegal (in Westminster, in any case.) The numbering of buildings gradually spread throughout the city, along with the disappearance of the once ubiquitous shop sign. These were replaced by the fascias still in use in many places today. At the same time, the names of streets, lanes and alleys were painted at each corner, though this happened only slowly. Numbering was equally haphazard to begin with, although it seems to have been completed by about 1773.⁷² The appearance of street numbers, both in trade cards, in advertising in general, and even in trade directories was even more random. Many shopkeepers do not appear to have bothered to have their trade cards altered when their shopfront was numbered, although there are many examples of cards in which the number has been hastily, and rather awkwardly, engraved into the original plate. Often an attempt was made to draw the reader's attention to the number by putting it in white on a dark oval, or vice versa. This device, too, might be squeezed in and almost over-looked in a crowded card, while the directions to the shop were still carefully embedded in the text. The very appearance of a number immediately distinguishes the card as having been produced after 1767,⁷³ however, and is one of

⁷¹ Dan Cruikshank and Neil Burton, Life in the Georgian City (London: Viking, 1990), 19.

⁷² Frank Presbrey, The History and Development of Advertising (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 25.

⁷³ John Richardson, London and Its People: A Social History from Medieval Times to the Present Day (London: Random House, 1995), 133. In 1767 an Act of Parliament legislated for the numbering of houses in the City, Westminster and the liberties. Since many shops were houses as well, this is the safest point from which to date a trade card.

the few hard and fast rules for dating which exist! Some cards produced immediately after this date, and certainly the cards produced after c. 1780 (and therefore outside the bounds of this study) have the number incorporated so carefully and neatly that there is no question of its having been added at a later date. Street numbering was obviously so well-accepted and widely-used by the end of the century, and shop signs nonexistent, that incorporation of the number was a commonplace.

Mid-period illustrations.

As with the changes in lettering styles and in text, changes to the illustrations and overall form of mid-century cards are many and various. Again, it must be borne in mind that not all shopkeepers allowed themselves to be blown about by the winds of fashion. Illustrations which appear to belong to the earlier period (either engraved or wood-cut) do still turn up with dates around the middle of the century.⁷⁴ Most reflect in some form or other the effects of the Rococo, however. Whereas most early cards are characterized by either a simple shop sign or a shop sign within a more elaborate frame, mid-period cards are often immediately identifiable by their use of single, double or triple cartouches.⁷⁵

There are two main types of single cartouche card: that in which the cartouche acts as a crest above the unframed text, and that in which the cartouche

⁷⁴ More often than not in such cases lettering style and the quality of the text will indicate a later date than the illustration suggests.

⁷⁵ The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1986) defines a cartouche as: "in architecture, scroll ornament e.g. volute of Ionic capital; tablet imitating, or drawing of, scroll with rolled-up ends, used ornamentally or bearing inscription; ornate frame..." which covers the multitude of rococo trade card styles fairly neatly.

contains the information. The first type of single cartouche cards are relatively few in number, compared with their more decorative double-cartouche cousins. The answer to their scarcity may well lie here: while they made admirable invoices because of their simplicity, they were less likely to be hoarded for their decorative appearance.⁷⁶ With few exceptions, the single cartouche of mid-period cards contains the shop sign, as in the Edward Clarke card (c. 1760-66, illustration 16.)⁷⁷ Clarke's card is typical in its use of rocaille work. Since this is the first illustration in which this has been noted, it is as well to describe it carefully, as it turns up continuously through the period. The reader will easily locate two c-shaped scrolls on the inside of the hatched cartouche, in the upper corners. On the outside of each of these are lobed shapes which resemble the bumps commonly found on the outside of sea shells; this is the most common form of rocaille work. In fact, the outside edges of the cartouches are made of two more such rocaille-'c' scrolls. The rest of the frame is built of continued and opposing scroll shapes, and what Michael Snodin⁷⁸ identifies as 'raffle' leaves, which resemble acanthus leaves in form. To the designer and engraver the beauty of these and of the floral and foliate forms

⁷⁶ I keenly regret the heavy-handed lines which appear in the illustrations here present. Copy machines will do that. The beauty of the originals cannot be described. The lines of some are so fine and delicate that they appear to have been drawn with a single hair. The sharpness and deftness of stroke produced in some cards was enough to take my breath away. Small wonder Ambrose Heal and Sarah Banks became obsessed with their respective collections.

⁷⁷ Clarke's cartouche also contains the word "From Mr. Cotterell, opposite the Mansion house". The dropping of names, notably previous owners of the business, or, as is likely in the case here, the master for whom the shopkeeper served an apprenticeship, is common on trade cards of any period. Such notice emphasizes the importance of name and reputation in trade, at least to the end of the eighteenth century.

⁷⁸ Snodin, Rococo: Art and Design, E20, E21, E23. I have searched high and low for some reference to raffle leaves in books on horticulture and have drawn a frustrated blank. Where the term comes from remains a mystery to me, although its use is noted by Alain Gruber, who includes the term in his glossary for Classicism and the Baroque in Europe (see bibliography).

which cluster the edge of the cartouche is that they depend on a certain irregularity of line which makes them very easy to transpose from one medium to another. The examples used here might easily have come from a design for an armorial cartouche on silver, or be fragments from a design for a clock face. All that is necessary in order to stay within the elastic borders of the style are that scrolling 'c' and 's' shapes are used together with floral and foliate forms in a form suggestive of movement. In this cartouche, as in most, there is the merest suggestion of asymmetry, arguably because this was both much harder to achieve successfully (without the design looking uncomfortably lop-sided), and because the required expertise cost extra money.

More remarkable by far are those single cartouche trade cards which openly embrace asymmetry. Michael Snodin identifies one of the earliest of these as that which Henry Copland created for cabinet and picture-frame maker, Benjamin Rackstrow in approximately 1738 (illustration 19).⁷⁹ The overall design owes much to the published work of continental artists, most especially Brunetti and Babel. Similar in feel is the trade card for the engraver Robert Clee⁸⁰ (illustration #15). Rather in keeping with the ponderous Palladian, which was in favour throughout fashionable circles at the time, the single cartouche is composed of heavy, deeply 'carved' 'c' scrolls, augmented on each side by heavy rocaille work and unfurling

⁷⁹ Snodin, "Trade Cards", 86. Rackstrow's card, which is dated in the engraving, is in the Heal Collection, 28.187.

⁸⁰ When I came to arrange my trade card examples by style I discovered to my amazement two other exact copies of this card produced for other traders: Tristram Chambers, upholsterer (BM Heal 125.18); and Paul Chotard (BM Heal 39.17). This last bears the engraved inscription "Morrison Sculp.". Assuming that Clee was the author of his own design, which is more than likely, Morrison put his name to an image he had pirated stroke for stroke. My own experience suggests that such 'knock-offs' are, in fact, quite common.

raffle leaves.⁸¹ There is an asymmetrical crest above, and a plinth-like scrolling base below. On most cards of this style, flowers, either in vases, in sprigs, or in garlands are tucked in asymmetrical arrangement between and on top of the scrolling rocaille work. In keeping with the rather bulbous shaping of the cartouche, the text of the Rackstrow card is given a curvature downwards to either side, which makes it appear as though it is engraved over a cabuchon shape⁸². Shading suggests the same shaping on the Clee card, though the text is perfectly horizontal, in common with most mid-period cards.

The trade card produced for Robert Burgess⁸³ (illustration #20) is even more asymmetrical, and is surrounded by a scene known as a 'fête champêtre'. Here the scrolling and rocaille cartouche incorporates a few architectonic details, such as the angled bracket shape directly above the shepherd's head, and the diaper-patterned plinth form directly in front of the searching shepherdess. These are frequent additions to Rococo-style trade cards, regardless of attempts at asymmetry. Burgess's card is an extraordinary design of a type much more likely to appear in the round modelled in porcelain or sculpted in metal for a clock front. Indeed, it reproduces with extraordinary care an illustration by Henry Copland for his *New Book of Ornaments*, published in 1746, although it is impossible to say whether the

⁸¹ It would be very useful to be able to suggest that such heavy, ponderous designs belong to the earliest of the mid-period cards, but such does not appear to be the case. Even while designs did lighten, the heavier style *appears* to retain its limited popularity through the 1770's.

⁸² While by no means a common trait of mid-century cards, this curvature of the text is by no means rare.

⁸³ Guildhall Library collection. Robert Burgess, Clock Engraver and Varnisher. On medium paper, 4 1/2" x 6". Copland's original has been reproduced as the frontispiece of Rococo, Art and Design in Hogarth's England, and a description can be found (for it is otherwise unidentified) under the catalogue number L16.

same designer engraved Burgess's card or whether it was carefully pirated, with the necessary changes, by another engraver. The intricate nature of the design must have made this a very expensive card to produce; this and its fashionable subject-matter are well-suited to a trade as rarified as that of clock engraver. Having made that point, however, expensive trade cards are just as likely to turn up in seemingly less illustrious trades. For remarkable examples see: James Gordon, seeds man⁸⁴; Henry Scott, fruiterer⁸⁵; and Richard Siddall, chemist⁸⁶. These very rare cards are more like small works of art and are valued accordingly today, just as they must have been at the time of their production.

Certainly the most common form of trade card during the period was the double cartouche. A small upper cartouche (occasionally lower) holding the shop sign or symbol of the shopkeeper's trade is held between the arms of a larger cartouche. The larger cartouche contains the text. Examples are many and various, and for the sake of clarity it is best to sub-divide this section into its major components.

Scrolled Double Cartouche

Since this is without a doubt the most common form of rococo trade card

⁸⁴ BM Heal Collection (no number), engraved by George Corbould, well-known engraver of trade cards, dating pre-1768.

⁸⁵ BM Heal Collection 74.38. Scott designed this remarkable, emblematic card himself. The famous Huguenot engraver, F. Vivares engraved it. The engraved date in the card appears to be 1754.. In case the emblems confused his clientele, Scott has thoughtfully produced an explanation which appears atop the gently scrolling frame. This is a masterpiece of trade card design, and as such most unusual.

⁸⁶ BM Heal Collection 34.64. Designed by the aforementioned Robert Clee, it is, in fact, a reverse copy of a French engraving entitled "La Pharmacie" of 1738. Clee engraved the card for Siddall around 1750. (see also Rococo: Art and Design in Hogarth's England, ed. Snodin, C14.)

treatment it seems only logical to deal with it first. The example chosen is that of William Guest, asses milk dealer⁸⁷ (frontispiece) inasmuch as it is typical of this variety. The reader will find upon careful study of the frame work of both sections that there is no rocaille work used, with the possible exception of the two shell-like crests, one immediately beneath the ass of the upper cartouche and the other echoing it at the base of the text cartouche. The cartouches are composed of juxtaposed, deeply carved 'c' scrolls which move the eye about the work. They are decorated at regular intervals by floral posies. Some attempt at suggesting depth is given by the hatch-work shading of the larger scrolls. While there are certain slight differences in the detail on either side, this is obviously meant to be a symmetrical design, and the eye certainly perceives it as such. This same design continues throughout the 1770's, the only exception being a tendency from around 1760 onwards to lighten the scroll-work, both in depth and in weight. By this I mean that there is often no attempt made at suggesting depth by the use of shading, and that the scrolls themselves are much thinner and often created using a much lighter pressure on the graver, or produced by cutting much shallower lines through the resist when etching. Michael Snodin suggests that this lighter style of etching may

⁸⁷ I make no academic bones about identifying this as my favourite trade card of all the thousands I have been privileged to study. It remains a source of deep regret that the artist is unidentified. The finess of line, the careful delineation of the background of the shop sign, the remarkably characterful face of the ass are indications of a masterful hand. I would not be at all surprised to find that the designer/engraver also designed for porcelain of the period. The similarities are many between this and certain of the works of Jeffrey Hammet O'Neal, who worked as a painter for the Chelsea factory around this time. Again, the poor quality of the illustration gives no indication of the crispness and delicacy of the original. An explanation is due to those who are unversed in eighteenth century eating habits, especially as asses milk sellers frequently used trade cards. Cows milk was de-fatted to remove anything which could be made either into cream for the table, or into butter, which was likewise heavily used during the period. In consequence, and because of the rather dubious reputation of both London cowmen and milk-maids, cows milk was avoided. Asses milk was considered a safe and desirable option for both invalids and for very young children. To the best of my knowledge, no one bathed in it. Very few people bathed at all, but that is another story.

have appeared around 1756 as a result of the work of Henry Copland and others on Thomas Chippendale's *Director*, and other books of design, such as Thomas Johnson's pattern books. He refers to them as "airy forms...often rendered in a new flickering engraving style composed of many tapering strokes."⁸⁸ The trade card produced by Mathias (or Matthew) Darly for William Lock, toy maker⁸⁹ (illustration # 21) is a good example. Since the various style overlap, however, this rather different approach to design cannot be used as a method of dating.

Commodity Display

Although several early trade cards do display the commodities on offer by the shopkeeper, this practice became much more common by mid-century, although it is limited to those trades which sell objects which are simple to display.¹ The card produced for William Darby,⁹⁰ upholsterer, appraiser and undertaker, as designed by Morrison, is a good example of this, and also exemplifies the use of multiple cartouches⁹¹ (illustration #22). Displayed in the cartouches are not only the shop sign (the Bear and Crown), but the cabinet-work listed in the text, and also, in the

⁸⁸ Snodin, "Trade Cards", 94.

⁸⁹ Museum of London acc. #22294. Though I have been unable to trace Lock himself through any directories, Darly was active from roughly 1754 to 1765.

⁹⁰ BM Heal 28.56. Gilbert (*Dictionary of Furniture Makers*, 226) dates the card as 1760-65, no doubt on stylistic grounds. He gives Darby's dates as 1750-70, made free of the Company of Cabinet-Makers in 1761. He was listed as bankrupt in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1769, but was still trading (not unusually) in 1770, when he appears in at least one directory, according to the notes Heal has made below the card. The engraver, likely Bewley Wynne Morrison, was active through the 1750's and 60's, and produced several trade cards for various cabinet and chair makers, all of the examples I have seen being on a par with the excellence of this example.

⁹¹ The display of goods occurs on trade cards of all shapes and sizes, from single asymmetrical onwards.

central lower cartouches, the sort of funeral Darby was likely to furnish.⁹² Glassmakers, goldsmiths, confectioners, cabinet-makers, tea dealers, toymen, suppliers of army regalia, to name only a few, availed themselves of this sort of design. Again, in terms of dating, the objects illustrated cannot in most cases be used to date the card. It is impossible to tell whether the shopkeeper reproduced the original design ten years after the goods illustrated had gone out of style merely because he refused to spend the extra money to replace them with more fashionable pieces. He may just as well deliberately have chosen to illustrate pieces which had a conservative flavour.

Chinoiserie Cards

Trade cards which exhibit Oriental-style devices occur in single and multi-cartouche formats, though the double cartouche is most common. The example chosen for close study is that of John Oliver, coffin-plate chaser, which was designed by I. Rousset and engraved by Mathias Darly around 1755.⁹³ (illustration 18), although several cards cited already as illustrations also flirt with chinoiserie, though to a much lesser degree. Typical motifs include: the branches of catkins (lower left edge); the obelisk⁹⁴ (between the double columns on the right); the contorted tree shape (same edge); the duck (on the bracket above the right-side

⁹² BM Heal Collection 28.56. Upholsterers were the men to turn to for a funeral during this period, mainly because they held large stocks of the necessary fabric----mainly black crepe----for an elegant funeral, which required yard upon yard of the stuff to make the required display.

⁹³ BM Heal H124.56 A remarkably similar card belongs to Ann and John Boyer, silk dyers, BM Heal Collection 57.10. In this case, which F. Garden engraved, though it is clearly pirated from the Rousset/Darly design.

⁹⁴ In a fine example of what I can only identify as typically eighteenth century confusion of continents, the obelisk seems to have been understood to be 'oriental', i.e. Chinese in derivation.

double columns); the tiny bells pendant from the same brackets; the ‘ho ho’ birds, on the opposite bracket; the reeds or rushes amongst which both birds sit; the two Chinese figures (bald heads, top knots *de rigueur*) standing in the arches to either side of the central cartouche; and finally, the pagoda-shaped roof supported by trellis-work, beneath which sits a figure known contemporarily as a ‘pagod’, usually a hatted, buddha-like figure.⁹⁵ One important motif missing from this trade card is the dragon, of which there are many superb examples on mid-century trade cards. The William Devis card⁹⁶ (illustration #23) provides a wonderful example. Another element missing from the Oliver card is a pair of juxtaposed, oriental-like heads (usually bearing the identifying pagoda-shaped hats, without which they would too-closely resemble ordinary European heads!) which were popular on mirrors of this variety.

Indeed, this similarity deserves greater note, since mirror designs appear to have had a great impact on trade card design during the period.⁹⁷ Many cards, chinoiserie and Rococo alike, will feature a pair of double columns forming the part or whole of either side of the design. This feature, so admirably suited to a frame for text, is characteristic of mirror design, especially in, though hardly limited to,

⁹⁵ Figures like this one were modelled by the hundreds by the Meissen factory, and others, throughout the period. The figure is seated and has a head balanced on a horizontal pin with a weight pendant below, that is within the body, so that a tap would set the head nodding. They were made without hats, thankfully; they are silly enough without.

⁹⁶ BM Heal Collection (no number). Michael Snodin reproduces the card of Thomas Gardner as designed by Henry Copland. Devis’s card copies it almost exactly, as do those of at least 12 other traders who Snodin has been able to identify. (Snodin, “Trade Cards” 91-92.) The Devis card is also important for its display of common commodities sold by a goldsmith of the period. In The London Goldsmiths, 1200-1800 (London: David and Charles Publ. Ltd, 1972). 141 Heal gives Devis’s dates as 1750-65.

⁹⁷ Snodin, “Trade Cards”, 88.

the designs of Thomas Chippendale. Although most attractive, the design has a perfectly logical origin: problems with the making of mirror glass during the period (indeed, into the nineteenth century) made large plates virtually impossible. Many smaller plates were made and cut to fit between thin slivers of frame arranged around a larger, open plate. This gave the mirror both more dramatic size, and more decorative appeal. Though exorbitantly expensive and very delicate⁹⁸, the decoration would have been relatively safe from danger hung on a wall, as would similar objects such as girandoles and light sconces, which also frequently lent their designs to trade cards.

Finally, although passing references to the taste for chinoiserie occur throughout the period under discussion, the great heyday for both cards and objects with a strong chinoiserie flavour seems to have been from c. 1750-1760. It must be remembered, however, that a taste for chinoiserie appeared again early in the nineteenth century in the main thanks to the eclectic tastes of the Prince of Wales, who used the style throughout his (constant) redecoration of his seaside idyll at Brighthelmstone, and while it is not common in trade cards of that period, it may appear occasionally.

Riband Work

Though I suspect that the cards which incorporate riband work would be recognized as mid-period on the basis of both the frequent use of rocaille and floral garlands, it is as well to note their popularity during the period, since they seem to

⁹⁸ The mirrors whose designs served so many makers of trade cards were originally intended to be executed in roughly carved pine, over which were painted several layers of gesso, before completion with gold leaf.

have been common, if only amongst booksellers and tea dealers. Without exception in my sample, these cards are double cartouche with scroll or rocaille construction, around which is wound, or from which unfurl, ribbons upon which either authors names are written, or tea and other commodities listed. The earliest example for which I have found an approximate date is that of Ryall and Withy (illustration #17). Several booksellers, amongst them Edward Dilly⁹⁹ (who owned a shop of some note near Mansion House) and John Fuller used this form, as did William Xerxes,¹⁰⁰ tea-dealer and grocer and Paul Roubel, teaman and grocer.¹⁰¹ The use of ribbons was a practical one, in that it resulted in more room for information, but it also reflects, I think, the popularity of riband work in the decorative arts of the period, most notably in Thomas Chippendale's favourite 'new pattern' for chairs, chiefly those carved in the very fashionable mahogany, and in contemporary designs for console tables, both English and French. Again, designers of trade cards clearly chose design elements with that the consuming public would recognize and be drawn to for their fashionability.

Fabric

Draped fabric turns up in many trade cards, sometimes, as will be examined here, central to the design, and sometimes almost hidden within it (John Oliver's card: illustration #18). John Iliffe's card (illustration #24) illustrates a common

⁹⁹ BM Heal 17.30. His dates are roughly 1753 to 1765. Other booksellers' trade cards using the same basic form are: Heal 17..51, Field, Cheapside, dated Jan.9 1760 as invoice; Heal 17.54 John Fuller, Newgate, dating roughly 1747-56 (by Heal); Heal 17.174 John Wilkie, St. Paul's Churchyard, dating roughly 1757-70 (Heal.)

¹⁰⁰ BM Heal 68.363. No dates, although the engraver, likely Borsch Long mate, worked around 1763.

¹⁰¹ BM Heal 68.253. Again, no dates, but Long mate engraved this card, as well.

form, in which the text is not contained within a cartouche, but merely framed on three sides by gathered and pendant drapery. The importance of drapery during this period can scarcely be over-emphasized. Most cabinet-makers styled themselves as 'upholderers' as well, and functioned effectively as the interior designers of the period, mainly because of their expertise in using fabrics. The arrangement displayed here would most commonly be found set around a very important bed (*Director*, Plate XLV), although a similarly lavish swagged effect occurs in the treatment of curtaining for a Venetian window, Plate XXXVI of Chippendale's third edition (1762) of the *Director* (illustration #25),¹⁰² complete with heavily fringed passementerie and puffed bow, which is here tied with decorative cord. Occasionally, as in the trade card of G. Reynolds, Cabinet Maker¹⁰³ (illustration 26), the use of fabric suggests more of a fictive curtain, as used frequently by contemporary artists in portraits. The fictive curtain used under such circumstances seems to have been a reference to the theatre, where a curtain separated the audience from the action on stage. Certainly there are other references to theatrical performance in Reynolds card, chiefly the masque, oboe, violin and furled musical manuscript. It is tempting to think that Reynolds is making a direct appeal to the throng of Londoners who attended the ubiquitous Italian opera which still drew large and fashionable crowds around 1755 when this card was likely designed.

Conclusion

¹⁰² I think it likely that this design had not changed since the first edition of 1754.

¹⁰³ BM Heal 28.190. Both Gilbert and Heal agree on a date of roughly 1754. inasmuch as Reynolds was one of many cabinet makers who subscribed to Chippendale's first edition of The Director.

What becomes obvious as the viewer studies the cards from the mid-period is that something has prompted a radical change from the early period, a change which is reflected in the majority of cards produced during the period from about 1740 through about 1770. In most cases there is a marked change in lettering style, and a change in approach to both the amount and the type of information included in trade cards; this is regardless of the image or style chosen for the illustration. In essence these changes reflect others which have already taken place within the community: an abundance of type faces common in print would have influenced the use of different lettering styles within a trade card simply by their very existence; the popularity of etching (which was a quicker and more fluid method than engraving) allowed the artist to incorporate the flowing and busy lines of the rococo to better effect; the more common use of trade catalogues and circulars for informing clients¹⁰⁴ made the listing of goods more natural on trade cards. All of these changes suggest one very important point: that advertisers were responding to changes within the market by making their advertisements more appealing.¹⁰⁵

The chain reaction which meant that more consumers begat more shops also meant

¹⁰⁴ Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping, 14-15. Since the earliest printed circular that Mui and Mui were able to find actually dates from relatively late, 1778, it is entirely possible that lists of goods for sale first occurred on trade cards. When it became obvious that the lists were getting too long and unwieldy, the shopkeeper might logically have put them on a separate sheet---the printed circular---and listed on his trade card only those items he wished to bring to the attention of his potential customers.

¹⁰⁵ The argument could easily be made that the changes which occur in trade card design are instigated by the engravers themselves, and not by the shopkeepers. This may very well be true in a majority of cases, but the fact remains that the shopkeeper would have paid for the engraving of the plate, and he would not have done so had he not been pleased by what he saw. Were he not sure that the design was of sufficient elegance to attract notice, he would have ordered the thing changed. Certainly, many shopkeepers saw no reason to alter their conservative designs to reflect more current fashion, and still others made do with simple, cheap, unillustrated letter press cards, but this paper took as its challenge the tracing of trends in advertising, and the change to rococo influence was widespread enough to indicate a trend, regardless of who initiated the change.

that more shops had to use advertising more effectively. While more words inform better than few, while more adjectives do more to convince, it is the image which will catch the eye first, and the image which says most about changes in advertising from the advertiser's point of view. The use of the latest fashionable style, in this case the Rococo/chinoiserie, indicates that by mid-period merely advertising the existence of a shop was not enough for most shopkeepers, nor was providing a list, or assuring the consumer of prompt service, all of which still appear in trade card advertising. They had to convince the consumer, first and foremost, of the fashionability of the shop; shop here, they are saying, and you may be assured that whatever you purchase will be *au fait* with current taste. I stress the point here because yet another change occurs after c. 1780 which turns its back on fashion as the main element of appeal. In summary: the changes made to trade card design between the early and the middle periods reflect the shopkeeper's need to draw more customers into his shop (and away from his competitors). They further reflect his faith that this could be done effectively through an appeal in trade card advertising to the fashion-sensitivity of his prospective clientele.

“Advertising advocates consumption of new products, or reinforces consumption of old products, but both are done using accepted themes and well-established symbols of happiness, health, and success. Far from changing values, it very much follows and upholds existing ones...it reiterates the essential problems of life....and simultaneously solves them. To the constant anxieties of life, advertising gives a simple answer. In consuming certain products, one buys not only a ‘thing’ but an image. An image which involves the belief and hope of having the good rather than the bad, happiness rather than misery, success rather than failure...And the more anxious, confused, uncertain and bewildered modern society gets, the stronger will be the role played by advertising.”¹

The central argument put forward at the beginning of this paper was that advertising showed increasing sophistication from the end of the seventeenth century through the middle of the eighteenth. The advertising which Langholz-Leymore describes here is merely the latest incarnation of advertising in the late twentieth century western world. Like the message of an advertisement itself, the definition reflects advertising as society has created it. It provides a useful benchmark, however, for the comparison of earlier advertising techniques to current practices.

Comparison of Langholz-Leymore’s description to trade card advertising in its first incarnation around the middle of the seventeenth century makes obvious its infancy; there is no coaxing or advocating involved in the first period of trade card advertising, except inasmuch as it notified prospective buyers of the existence of the shop. There are no values expressed by illustration or text. Trade cards in the earliest period of their use are merely purveyors of very basic information: this is the shop sign, this is who owns the shop, and this is what he sells. The first stirrings of an attempt to coax (by association with recognized

¹ Varda Langholz-Leymore, Hidden Myth; Structure and Symbolism in Advertising (London: Heinemann, 1975), ix.

fashion) occurred as the seventeenth century ended and the next progressed: more ornament was used to decorate the cards, using motifs in keeping with the popular, classically based style of the day---the Baroque. By the early 1730's greater diversity was appearing in lettering, and both commodity display and increasingly lengthy lists are present more frequently, in an obvious attempt to engage the consumer's eye and to coax him by offering him lists of goods. From this point onwards to the end of this survey, fashion and the selling of an image, as Langholz-Lemore puts it, played a profound part in decorating the cards; indeed, on some more remarkable versions the decoration must have vied, then as now, with the information the card contained for the first attentions of the viewer.

Superficially this change in approach might be explained by postulating that shopkeepers and trade card designers were merely reacting with favour to a novel style in the same way their clientele did. They moved with the times, in other words. Of course, it would have been much cheaper had they not done so. Even without the benefit of contemporary production costs, it is only logical to assume that cleaning up an old copper plate, up-dating information, and sharpening images must have cost a trifling amount in comparison to commissioning a new plate, and having it printed. In those difficult times, when bankruptcy was a strong and hungry wolf waiting outside a very fragile door, something more than the desire for a pretty picture must have convinced a great number of shopkeepers to take on the added expense of having a new design drawn and engraved. The increased competition between shops selling the same commodities to the same group of consumers was obviously causing some to think more deeply. Choosing to allow themselves to be blown about by the winds of fashion and change was a

conscious choice on the part of some shopkeepers. Perhaps they had watched the wind as I do when a gale blows in off the sea. It carries flowers and leaves along, jumbling them together in a mass, but it leaves the rocks behind. By adopting a fashionable style, one which would be easily recognized by those in society who considered themselves tastefully aware, shopkeepers not only identified *themselves* as tastefully aware, as well, but established a common ground with those they sought to serve. The message was both stated directly, as when some shopkeepers used terms like 'the latest fashion', and indirectly by their use of current fashionable images. The use of the latest style in illustration, in this case the rococo, not only assured the prospective buyer that the shop was likely to furnish novel and desirable goods, but that the shopkeeper obviously recognized the importance of fashion. It may be concluded, therefore, that the major difference between early period trade cards, and their mid-period offspring is that the first is offering a simple, direct message, while the message of the second is both direct and subliminal. One works directly on the conscious mind, the other on both the conscious and sub-conscious. I am not suggesting that shopkeepers in mid-eighteenth century London met with their advertising representatives to bandy about the relative merits of direct and indirect advertising. I am suggesting that those same shopkeepers, faced by increasing and worrying competition, struggled to find a way to convince consumers that their shop had more to offer than the one next door. They did this through the adoption of the newest fashion in order to establish a rapport with their customers on several levels, some of which might be stated in direct language, some by suggestion alone, and here Langholz-Leymore's words ring true. In pursuing the language of fashion, mid-period trade cards

illustrate the development from selling a trader and a commodity in the early period, to selling an image, that of the fashionable consumer, by the mid-period. This approach is consistent with Langholz-Leymore's statement that advertising "very much follows and upholds" existing values. By the mid-eighteenth century market competition was such that shopkeepers realized the necessity of identifying themselves with the mores of the clientele whose business they sought. It was no longer enough simply to let the customer know the shop existed; he had to be convinced that his experiences with a certain shop would reflect his values as a customer.

Trade card advertising quite clearly developed in sophistication from first to second period, but where did it go from there? The third and last period lies outside the bounds of this study, but it deserves mention if only in order to suggest a number of approaches which might engage future researchers in the field.

The burgeoning economy which gave birth to an industrial revolution in many parts of England did much to engender great competition within the business community. Judging from the number and variety of of trade cards which survive, this form of advertising remained a vital part of a shopkeeper's scheme.² To begin, both letter press cards, and a few cards with obvious ties to the early eighteenth century Baroque style continued in use; the former remained common, the latter much less so. Even chinoiserie cards turned up late in the century: James

² Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1995), 130. "Display became an increasingly important element of the shopkeeper's repertoire, alongside the promotional panache of advertising, in a bid to convince buyers that they too were engaging in a world of refined fashionability, prompting Wedgwood's claim that 'Fashion is infinitely superior to merit.'" Display had always been important, as noted in chapter two, but the drive to compete this way for custom became keener late in the century. This development was only one of several which eventually led to the demise of trade card advertising.

Lorimer, silk dyer, used a chinoiserie card as an invoice in 1791.³ Lettering styles increased in variety and in number, both in those available for use, and in those used within a single trade card. If there is a single tendency to be noted within the text itself, it is that as the century wore to a close, less and less text appears. Many early nineteenth century trade cards have reverted to late seventeenth century text form: the name and address of the shopkeeper, usually his trade, and no more. This is especially obvious in trade cards which lean heavily toward picturesque landscapes. The text is usually incorporated into the landscape in some fashion, as a message written on a board leaning against a rock at the side of the path, for instance, or written upon the shield which the figure of Hope supports.

Shades of the rococo continue in the frames of trade cards until the end of the century, although they are vastly outnumbered by the plethora of other stylistic approaches which developed as the century closed. Hardly surprisingly, the attenuated grotesque forms so imaginatively used by the Adam brothers appear by the mid-1770's, as typified by the Guildhall ticket of 1776 (Illustration #27.) Just as these regular, symmetrical and easily constructed confections lent themselves ideally to everything in the home from the embossing of silver tea pots to the central ceiling medallions of a drawing room, so they made elegant and highly decorative frames for trade cards (and other ephemera). Although a large segment of society (led chiefly by the aristocracy) quickly tired of the Adams' rather effeminate style⁴ and

³ BM Heal Collection 57.37.

⁴ When I returned from my first visit to London to study trade cards I was astonished, and worried, by my lack of Adam-esque trade cards; I knew from twenty years of decorative arts study that this style should have swept advertising during the period, given the swath it cut through every other form of art. On my second trip a year later I focussed on the cards in the Sarah Banks collection at the BM, since she was collecting during the period which troubled me. Although I found a number of examples, they were still seriously outnumbered by cards in what I have chosen to call the 'romantic-patriotic' vein.

turned to the ponderous and more sober, and overtly masculine Greek, the delicate medallions, riband work and husk garlands which typify the Adam approach remain in use to the end of the century.

In its turn, the Greek produced a preponderance of trade cards focusing on monuments, and architectonic detail. The Twining's trade card featured the heavy pediment and columns of the entrance way to their new establishment on the Strand. Many trade cards feature a monument on which is 'carved' in the shopkeeper's details. Some set the monument in a landscape, others provided no background at all, producing a very austere card and, perhaps, a sense of the reliability of the traders.

Equally popular are images of putti (small chubby children, often with an air of either industry or mischief about them) engaged in the trade being advertised. Sometimes they gambol alone, and sometimes in the company of a female, usually classically (often rather scantily) dressed (Illustration 28)! Heavy use is made of classical symbolism. While this is in keeping with the heavily classical bent of all the arts during the period, I find it fascinating that advertisers realized the value of acknowledging the classical erudition of their clientele and so incorporated it within their advertising. Many of the symbols which appear in every variety of trade card through this period are readable now only to those who boast a background in art history or the classics. Few others would recognize that the billowing drapery behind the woman with the anchor identifies her as Hope, or that the wings on a putto's helmet, together with the caduceus often lying discarded nearby, identify him as Mercury⁵. How many would put him together with his

⁵ I am, once again, indebted to Dr. Fulton for pointing out that Mercury was the patron of merchantsand thieves.

classically assigned attributes to realize that the shopkeeper was promising dispatch by use of a symbol rather than spelling it out in words? Either an education in classical Greek and Roman works was a great deal more standard to the average education (both male and female!), or classical allusions in everyday life were common enough to make this now-rarified vocabulary the very *patois* of our eighteenth century forbearers.

Such classically imbued images remain popular throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century. They are often allied with that other prevalent treatment in trade cards: the picturesque landscape. Exploration of this particular subject deserves much more careful study than can be attempted here. Although study of the picturesque and attention to the sensibility it suggested had long been the reaction to the overly-controlled sentiments of earlier generations, I strongly suspect that there is more to the picturesque in trade cards than a mere nod to fashion. In his book, *Judging New Wealth*, James Raven studies the anti-trade sentiments which grew to deafening proportions in fiction from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. Application of these findings to a consideration of the approaches taken by shopkeepers to advertising by the last decade of the century has led me to believe that the picturesque landscape, and more importantly, the patriotic symbols which usually reside therein in trade cards, is an attempt on the part of shopkeepers to allay the fears of the consuming public that shopkeepers and businessmen in general were greedy, social-climbing profit-mongers: "From the 1760's treatises explaining the decline of empires drew new parallels to the British condition and warned of the dangers which upstart wealth might pose to manners,

morality, and national vigour.”⁶ Even Adam Smith referred to ‘the sneaking art of underling tradesmen.’⁷ James Raven traces this widespread distrust through popular fiction, moral essays and dramas, and it must have caused a certain amount of dismay in the trading community. Raven states that “The aim was dissociation from extravagant display and the alleged frivolity and materialism introduced by rapidly accumulated wealth”⁸; therefore images which appealed to something other than a search for novelty and fashion were necessary. The fears of consumers might be allayed by the pursuit of common convictions which united both trader and consumer. At a time when Britain’s mastery of the seas and her heavy dependence on foreign commerce were being threatened by war, the common ground was obviously the threat to Britain’s greatness, her hard-won but justified position as moral and commercial leader of the world. Trade cards such as V. Grelliers (Illustration #29) are typical of a variety produced across a swath of trades, from apothecaries and booksellers to bakers, boot makers, insurance brokers, carvers, engravers, carpenters, butchers, surgeons, grocers, nail manufacturers, goldsmiths, and many more. Virtually all of them contain the same key symbols: Hope with her anchor, a picturesque rock (which often carries the text), a willow tree, or equally commonly the immediately-recognizable English oak; the sea (rough or calm) with ships lying off or in full sail, and often, though not invariably, bundles or crates clearly either destined for shipping, or newly arrived. As here, Hope is always looking out to sea. In some examples Britannia waits either with

⁶ James Raven, Judging New Wealth: Popular Publishing and Responses to Commerce in England 1750-1800(Oxford: Oxford. Univ. Press, 1992), 4.

⁷ Cited in James Raven, Judging New Wealth, 5.

⁸ James Raven, Judging New Wealth, 257.

her or alone, her shield and spear beside her. Sometimes the great British lion lies at her feet, wide awake and fiercely brooding. Note that in illustration 29 none of these images has anything whatsoever to do with the contents of the text; this text was shrinking in any case, being nothing more than name, trade and address on some of the more obviously picturesque/romantic cards. Mr. Grellier promises that houses may be fashionably papered, but there is not even a hint of his trade shown in the illustration of the card, and so it is with most trade cards fashioned in this way. The text bears the usual banal adjectives used to ingratiate buyer to trader, but the image binds both walks together in the patriotic hope of Britain's continued commercial sovereignty over the seas. Sales become secondary (it would seem) to the shared emotional bond.

With this development, the evolution of advertising advanced one more step. Direct dissemination of information marked the first stage---there is no attempt to do anything but inform on a single, simple level. Direct and subliminal methods of imparting information marked the second stage: information communicated by word and illustration related to more than the mere sale of goods. Advertisers recognized that information might be given in such a way as to appeal to the personal and social aspirations of prospective consumers, as well as to their desire for acquisition. The third stage was characterized by an appeal to the more generous, patriotic and philanthropic side of the consumer's character.⁹

⁹ This is not the first time that emotional manipulation has appeared in advertising, but it is certainly the first period in which such appeals are widespread. As noted earlier, advertisements for the anodyne necklace asked mothers to consider how they would feel if they woke one morning to find their teething infant dead for lack of the anodyne necklace. At the other end of the emotive spectrum was a television ad which caught my astonished fancy one evening two years ago in London: how would I feel, I was asked, if I ventured out amongst my friends tomorrow with a cell phone which was quite clearly last year's model?

In marked contrast to the self-centered appeal of the mid-period approach, this last approach, by the end of the eighteenth century, reflected the importance which a great part of the consuming public felt for the health of society as a whole. Many writers comment on the lack of effective religious practice and observance which was seemingly endemic throughout all ranks of society. At the same time France (and other maritime nations, including the increasingly powerful United States of America) threatened Britain's supremacy on the seas and compromised her increasing dependence on international trade. While many advertisers continued to respond to the consumer's need for fashionable goods, others changed their approach to incorporate symbols which promoted a central message of romantic nationalism. In the complete absence of any illustrated commodities, with sometimes only the merest mention of a trade, the advertiser is clearly stating his support for the values of his clientele. What is first being marketed is his patriotism. Whether he was marketing his patriotism in order to convince his clientele that he was not one of Adam Smith's 'sneaking underling tradesmen', or whether he was merely but deliberately reflecting the tenor of the times remains for future research to decide.

Yet another avenue which remains to be explored is the alleged relation between luxury, effeminacy and consumption. In *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, John Brewer points out that "The fear that luxury and refinement were weakening the moral fibre of the nation persisted throughout the eighteenth century, but at times of national crisis---during wars, rebellions and revolutions---the rumble of worry rose to a roar."¹⁰ It is a fair assumption, I think, that the roar Brewer refers

¹⁰ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 82.

to was in print, available for both shopkeeper and consumer alike to read. Might it not be possible, then, that the *volte face* on fashion which I marked with some surprise in the dirth of cards in Adam style (widely judged to be effeminate) is a response to the insistent re-appearance of the luxury debate? In response to an outcry against luxury goods, especially foreign ones, would it not make sense to tradesmen to highlight another aspect of consumption? Better to focus on the strength of British trade, or the tradesmen's support for Britannia and her navy, or on a positive response to sensibility than on the origin or fashionable nature of the goods they sold.

The Robert Opie Museum of advertising history(in Gloucester) begins its collection at the end of the eighteenth century. Most American museums begin theirs in the middle of the nineteenth. Indeed, many books on advertising history ignore the eighteenth century entirely and assume that real advertising began during the Victorian period. There can be no doubt that *mass* advertising began then of a sort never dreamed of in the period studied by this thesis, but I would argue that the advertiser's methods built only in numbers and not in sophistication over the techniques used in trade card advertising from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards. Given more time and space, I would advance a cyclical theory which maps the trend from simplistic advertising (such as that of early trade cards) through fashion-attraction, and into emotional manipulation, and I would demonstrate the wheel's constant revolution over succeeding generations of advertising. It turns still, albeit with dizzying speed.

For more than a generation, historians have focussed on consumption patterns in British society, moving further and further back in the early modern

period to examine trends which might, just possibly, provide the basis for what Neil McKendrick once hopefully referred to as the consumer revolution. The threads of consumerism are woven deep in western society. They had been pulled taught and strong onto the frame by the time the need and the possibility of advertising with trade cards appeared in the middle of the seventeenth century. As a means of tracing the growth of a consumer society, and as a vital means of studying the market response to consumer demand, leading it or following it, trade card advertising, especially, provides invaluable information. Further study of the cards themselves, and the means used to produce them, should be one more strong and colourful thread in the weft of the tapestry which is consumer history.

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Addendum One: Letterpress Cards

Although letterpress cards are poorly represented in this work it must be noted that they vastly outnumbered their more decorative siblings throughout the period under discussion. They were undoubtedly far less expensive to produce, because they lacked illustration, but for that very reason, perhaps, they have very seldom been kept. As noted earlier, the Heal and Banks collections contain many example of letterpress cards produced for traders who also paid for engraved cards. Whether these cards served the same purposes, or whether they were made at different, more financially troubled points in the life of a business is difficult to say. Were research to turn up both types for the same shop with similar dates on them, the answer would obviously be that within the same business decorative trade cards served different functions from letterpress cards. Given the emphasis on rank during the period, one might go so far as to speculate that engraved trade cards were sent out or given to those prospective or existing clients whose custom the trader most wanted to cultivate---those with money and connexions---while those whose custom was less valuable received their news and invoices on plainer reminders. In any case, being less decorative, it is far more likely that these examples were disposed of by the recipient once their initial purpose had been answered; therefore, those cards which remain are likely a tiny fraction of those produced.

Addendum Two - Major Trade Card Collections

The trade cards sampled for this study come from four principal English collections: the Heal collection and the Banks collection, both housed in the British Museum; the John Johnson collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; and the collection of print ephemera in the Guildhall Library, London. Three minor collections were also sampled (thoroughly, by dint of their small size): the ephemera collection in the Print Room of the Victoria and Albert Museum; the ephemera collection of the Museum of London; and the small but exquisite collection of early trade cards assembled by Samuel Pepys (found in the catalogue under 'vulgaria') housed in his library at Magdalene College, Cambridge.

While all of these collections have been separately catalogued¹ most curators have fallen back on organisation of their collections by trade. With this in mind, it seems useful to provide here a break-down of the headings used in the Heal and Banks collections (and likewise in all the other collections sampled), and a comparison of the number of cards each collection holds in any given area. This can be found in Table One. This will provide future students not only with an idea of what headings to look for in a catalogue of trade cards, but also an idea of the importance of trade cards to various trades in London, to say nothing of the enormous number of small and to our twenty-first century eyes, seemingly insignificant trades which chose to follow this route as a means of alerting the public to their existence.

Before studying the contents of Table One, the reader is advised to take

¹ There is, alas, no central data base which collates all the collections in one place. Such a work would be of enormous benefit to students of eighteenth and nineteenth century English consumer history.

certain vital points into consideration: to begin, the disparate backgrounds and collecting philosophies of the two collectors themselves. Sarah Banks was collecting contemporary cards during her lifetime alone, at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Sir Ambrose Heal was collecting throughout the first half of the twentieth century, by which time trade cards had become an attractive, if eccentric, collecting area. Both collected from every possible trade over the broadest range of dates. If there is a diminishing number of cards in Heal's collection from the early nineteenth century onwards this may be due as much to the lessened popularity of the medium at that time as to what might be Heal's realisation that the medium had reached its apex by 1770 and was in artistic if not numerical decline thereafter. No doubt the dispersal of many old households and their papers both between and after the two world wars hastened the appearance of many trade cards (kept for household accounting purposes, in many cases) onto the market during the period in which Heal was collecting. He did much to advertise his interest, and the correspondence which accompanies the trade cards on microfilm suggests that he had the benefit of many eyes watching for interesting examples which might turn up. Although she managed to pick up a few earlier cards, these were rare in Sarah Banks's time, and, as already noted, the chronological parameters of her collection are marked by her own dates. Like Heal, she appears to have collected carefully, and also with the help of correspondents, not indiscriminately adding letter-press cards simply because they turned up, but attempting to form a collection of representative trades. Both collectors suffered from the cruel scythe of fate: there might well have been many more and exquisite trade cards produced which by the simple work of fate have failed to survive.

Sir Ambrose Heal had the benefit of a longer perspective, and collected over a much broader period of time. With these points in mind, it would be a mistake to study the list of trade cards in Table One as an indication of the way in which certain trades flourished during the mid-eighteenth century, which was Heal's favourite period, and disappeared by Banks's time. It is certainly true that some trades *did* disappear or diminish during the eighteenth century, a fact which explains the complete dearth of sedan makers in the Banks collection, and the low number of peruquiers relative to the Heal collection, but to make a such a judgment based simply on the list of trade cards would be a mistake; the cards must be set within the context of eighteenth and nineteenth century trade history before any conclusions can be drawn.

As to numbers: Heal photographed many of the Banks cards and entered them (with the Banks stamp intact) into his own collection, as will be evident from the Banks stamp still visible on many of the trade cards on the Heal microfilm,² and then numbered them as part of his collection. There are, therefore, duplicates between the collections. Also, the numbers presented beside each trade represent not only trade cards but shop bills as well. As noted earlier, shop bills and trade cards could be very different animals. The shop bill usually featured a small version of the shop sign in the upper left corner or centre top, perhaps done by the same artist, together with the name of the firm and the words "Bot (sic) of.....", with perhaps the first two (rarely, but to the researcher's delight when it happens, three) numbers of the year, the others to be filled in as necessary. Of course trade cards often doubled as shop bills, thus saving the trader the added expense of

² It seems axiomatic now, but as a novice studying the collection, this unknown circumstance caused hours of confusion until Sheila O'Connell very kindly put me right.

printing separate shop bills. Only in certain instances have I noted the number of actual shop bills within a sub-heading³, and this merely to make the student aware that they exist in some number. Then, too, the number of trade cards in each section is not representative of the number of traders who produced cards; many traders produced several versions of their trade cards over their trading lifetimes, either to notify of a change of address, or more commonly, to bring the card up to fashionable pitch. Neither Heal nor Banks limited themselves to a single representative card per trader, a fact for which I am very grateful. I have, in certain pertinent cases, noted the number of traders represented by the trade cards in the collections, but to go through both collections exhaustively to pick out duplications would have taken far more time than was available to me during two all-too-brief visits to London.

³ Shop-bills are designated as such in the hand-written catalogues for each collection. These are readily available for study in the Print Room of the British Museum. Much can be learned from a study of these important books, and any student of trade cards should begin there.

Addendum Three: Dating Trade Cards

Reliable criteria for the dating of trade cards are proving tantalizingly elusive. Attempting to date by paper mark or variety of paper is pointless, as stocks of paper were frequently kept on hand by printers or stationers for years until they suddenly became necessary due to depletion of stock, or because that particular grade of paper was in demand. Dating by printing process can be useful only insofar as the invention of lithography can be dated to the end of the eighteenth century, and its first commercial uses are limited to post-1820¹. Engraving and etching were popular throughout the period under discussion. New fashions in print type or engraved letter certainly appeared from time to time, and using these it is possible to give the earliest point at which a trade card might have been produced, but hardly the latest, since a font never really disappeared, any more than any other type of fashion, skirt length or heel height, ever really disappears. Woodblock prints might appear early (i.e. in the seventeenth century) but their studied naivete was used to good commercial effect well into the period under discussion and beyond. Engraving and etching were only superseded in the nineteenth century, well within a period which provides firm commercial records which can be checked for trade card producers, unlike those of the preceding century, when dating by this means would really be useful. Add to this the fact that many traders had cards printed in such numbers as to have them on hand for the duration of their tenure (and if advertising failed to spur business, often past it!), without the need to have more printed. As well, many traders would have balked at

¹ Bamber Gascoigne, *How to Identify Prints: A Complete Guide to Manual and Mechanical Processes from Woodcut to Ink Jet* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 19a.

paying to have a copper plate re-etched in a more fashionable style, either because they viewed the extra expense as unnecessary, or because they felt that reusing an image and text which their customers had come to recognize made more commercial sense than confusing them with new illustrations and information. As has been emphasized in the text, it is clear that to both eighteenth century trader and consumer alike, the pull of tradition was strong. Where traders did pay to have plates re-etched, a comparison of evident fashion (for example, a rococo border replaced by a neo-classical one) can be useful, but will usually provide only a spread of years or decades rather than a precise date. Even then, the only dating possible would be to determine the earliest point at which the card might have been printed first (not when it was used last!). Where the trader's dates are known, these also provide guidance.

Trade directories are invaluable sources for such information, but again are problematic, as noted in chapter two, since their compilers were highly selective of the traders they chose to include; a trader might have been in business for several years before a directory was compiled for the area, or before a compiler chose to recognize a trader. Were there a national, or better yet, an international data base of trade cards in public collections, much could be done by comparing trade cards with bills of sale for the same traders, but such a data base is the stuff of dreams.

My own dating of the trade cards drawn for sample started with Sir Ambrose Heal's copious notes which were photocopied below the trade cards themselves and put on the British Library microfilm. He had studied the collection of eighteenth century trade directories in the possession of the Guildhall Library, London, and drew much of his information from them. Heal published two books on specific

trades: cabinet makers and goldsmiths, which contain much the same information on directories but in a more legible form!

An exhaustive list of cabinet-makers may also be found in Beard and Gilbert's *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers* (which often lists existing trade cards), and for clock-makers, some goldsmiths and engravers Britten's *Old Clocks and Watches and Their Makers* is a wonderful resource.

My most valuable source was undoubtedly the three CD-Rom series *Biography Database, 1680-1890*. The original disc was issued in 1995, and up-dates were released in 1998 and 2000. These three discs include information drawn from a number of major eighteenth-century trade directories (mainly London, but not exclusively), as well as from the *Gentleman's Magazine* and other less well-known sources, such as subscription lists for eighteenth century publications (e.g. Chippendale's *Director*).

On-line resources included "londonancestor.com"; the Westminster pollbook; and the book history site administered by the Devon County Council. All three contain a wealth of information drawn from public records, and should be investigated carefully by those wishing to date tradesmen, and thence their cards. The Devon site, especially, is a remarkable treasure trove of information, focussing on the book trades but not exclusive to them.

Finally, if a search of the trader by name or address completely failed me, I attempted to date the engraver, which at least gave me an approximate period for the trade card issue. It is far from fool-proof, however, in as much as the copper plate might well have been an old one re-used, in which case the engraver's name would probably have been left in situ. Of course, not all trade cards bear the names

of their engravers , and at times existing names are obscured by poor print quality, either of the original or of the microfilm, in the case of the John Johnson, Heal and Banks collections. In short, learning to 'think around corners' is a major part of the search process! With the best will in the world, success is never guaranteed: Of the roughly 500 which I chose for sample, approximately 140 remain undated in any way.

Addendum Four: A Note on the Illustrations

I am immensely grateful to both the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Guildhall Library, London for permission to photograph examples from their collections, many of which have been used here. While every attempt was made to choose pertinent examples from these collections, there were times when these eluded me, and I have been forced to reproduce photocopies made from the microfilms of the Heal and Banks collections produced many decades ago by the British Museum. I suspect that the photography of the originals took place in situations of fluctuating light levels, and the microfilms themselves have deteriorated over the years, resulting in photocopies which are usually grainy and often badly marked by scratches on the film or on the plates which hold the film for viewing. The originals are kept in closed conditions in the Prints and Drawings Department of the British Museum and require much leg-work and time by the staff to extract; the microfilms¹ often give as much information as a novice researcher needs. Grateful though I am for the copies, I must caution the reader that they bear lamentably little resemblance to the originals, which are, almost without exception, breathtaking in their fineness of line, and quite exquisite as representatives of commerce in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No wonder these remarkable pieces of ephemera are often worth more than art prints produced at the same time.

¹ The Prints and Drawings Room of the British Museum holds a complete set, as does the Guildhall Library, which also owns a machine which can copy. At the time of writing, the copies belonging to the British Library are missing, somewhere in a lengthy transit from their old home as part of the British Museum to their new one not far from St. Pancras Station at 96 Euston Road.

TABLE ONE
THE HEADINGS AND NUMBER OF TRADE CARDS
WITHIN EACH IN THE HEAL AND BANKS COLLECTIONS
OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Please note: The numbers given here do not represent the number of *individual* traders within each branch. Of the 243 cards given for Cabinet Makers, for instance, 212 traders are represented: some of the cards are duplicates and others are the alternate (later) cards of a few traders. These differences are occasionally noted for comparative purposes within the body of the table itself.

<u>Trade</u>	<u>Heal</u>	<u>Banks</u>
Agricultural Implements	3	14
Apothecaries	8	11
Archery	3	8
Artists	18	54
Asses Milk Sellers	15	5
Auctioneers	31	42
Bakers	33	41
Banking and Insurance	25	34
Basket Makers	10	4
Bathing Machines	18	16
Baths	6	6
Beekeepers	5	--
Bell Hangers and Founders	8	6
Bellows Makers	4	--
Billiard Table Makers	4	--
Birds and Animals	11	18
Blacking Makers	18	12
Blind Makers	8	4
Bookbinders	38	18
Booksellers	190	114
Boot and Shoe Makers	151	104
Box Makers	4	2
Boxers	3	--
Breeches Makers	51	13
Brewers and Maltsters	26	21
Bricklayers and Plasterers	14	14
Brush Makers	26	4
Buckle Makers	8	--
Butchers	23	20

<u>Trade</u>	<u>Heal</u>	<u>Banks</u>
Button makers	20	9 (9 traders)
Cabinet Makers	249	173
Carpenters	22	13
Carpets and Rugs	31	14
Carriers	58	24
Carvers and Gilders	68	65
Chandlers and Tallow Merchants	116	49
Cheesemongers	23	8
Chemists and Druggists	91	95 (79 traders)
Chimneysweeps and Dustmen	52	40
China and Glass	54	25
Chocolate and Cocoa	10	18
Clocks and Watches	118	147
Clothiers	157	24
Cloth Workers	12	--
Coaches	19	
Coach and Cart Builders	39	58
Coal Merchants	34	31
Comb Makers	18	7
Composition Ornaments	9	72
Cooks and Confectioners	74	70
Coopers	4	--
Cork Workers	11 (3 are shop bills)	4 (3 traders)
Corn and Flour Dealers	16 (4 are shop bills)	8
Cutlers and Razor Makers	106 (26 are shop bills)	94
Dairy Products	12 (no shop bills)	12
Dentists	24	38
Doctors and Surgeons	23 (2 shop bills)	14
Drawing masters	19	38
Dyers and Cleaners	60	20
Engineers	40	47
Engravers	190 (152 traders)	270
Fan Makers	13	16
Feather Bedding	17	6
Feather and Flower Makers	--	24
Fireworks Makers	7	7
Fishing Tackle	37	14
Fishmongers	17	41

<u>Trade</u>	<u>Heal</u>	<u>Banks</u>
Fruiterers	25	16
Furriers	30	25
Glass Trades	66	53
Goldsmiths and Jewellers	453 (357 traders)	246
Grocers and Tea Dealers	370 (110 are shop bills)	170
Gunsmiths	72	68
Haberdashers	189	103
Hairdressers	28	33
Hosiers, Glovers, Hatters	463	265
Horticulture	52	40
Inns (innkeepers separate)	116	126 (London only)
Japanners	12	--
Lacemen	129	51
Lampmakers and Lighters	20	20
Land Surveyors	7	25
Law Officers	8	8
Leather Trades	22	7
Libraries	76	26
Linen Drapers	377	220
Lottery Offices	4	24
Map and Chart Sellers	18	7
Medicines	63	31
Mercers	279	109 (102 traders)
Metal Trades	351	192
Milliners	92	117
Mineral Waters	16	2
Museums	8	7
Music	104	109
Oil and Colourmen	182	53
Painters and Decorators	141	69
Paper Makers	65	31
Pens, Ink etc.	35	21
Perfumers	68	69
Peruquiers	47	23
Pewterers	36	7
Picture Restorers	23	12
Pins and Needles	16	18
Playing Cards	15	18

<u>Trade</u>	<u>Heal</u>	<u>Banks</u>
Pottery and Porcelain	20	29 (16 traders)
Poulterers	7	13
Printers	186	52
Print Sellers	106	118
Robe Makers	13	--
Registry Office	5	--
Saddlers	63	96
Sago Powder	5	--
Scale Makers	52	16 (8 traders)
Schools	77	89
Scientific Instruments	126	69
Sculptors and masons	26	34
Sedan Makers	6	--
Shawl Merchants	5	6
Shipping	30	33
Slop Makers	5	--
Soup Makers	5	--
Stables	11	11
Stationers	183	72
Stays and Corsets	37	41
Taxidermists	5	--
Tea and Coffee Urns	5	--
Tents and Tarpaulins	10	--
Threadmakers	17	7
Tobacco and Snuff(incl. labels)	182	188
Tool Makers	20	--
Toy Men	39	16
Trunk Makers	82	22
Truss Makers	13	--
Turners	39	26
Umbrella Makers	27	19
Undertakers	90	52
Upholsterers	124	--
Warehousement	17	--
Weavers	25	4
Whalebone and Cane Merchants	7	--
Whip Makers	11	19

Trade

Wines and Spirits

Woolen Drapers

Heal

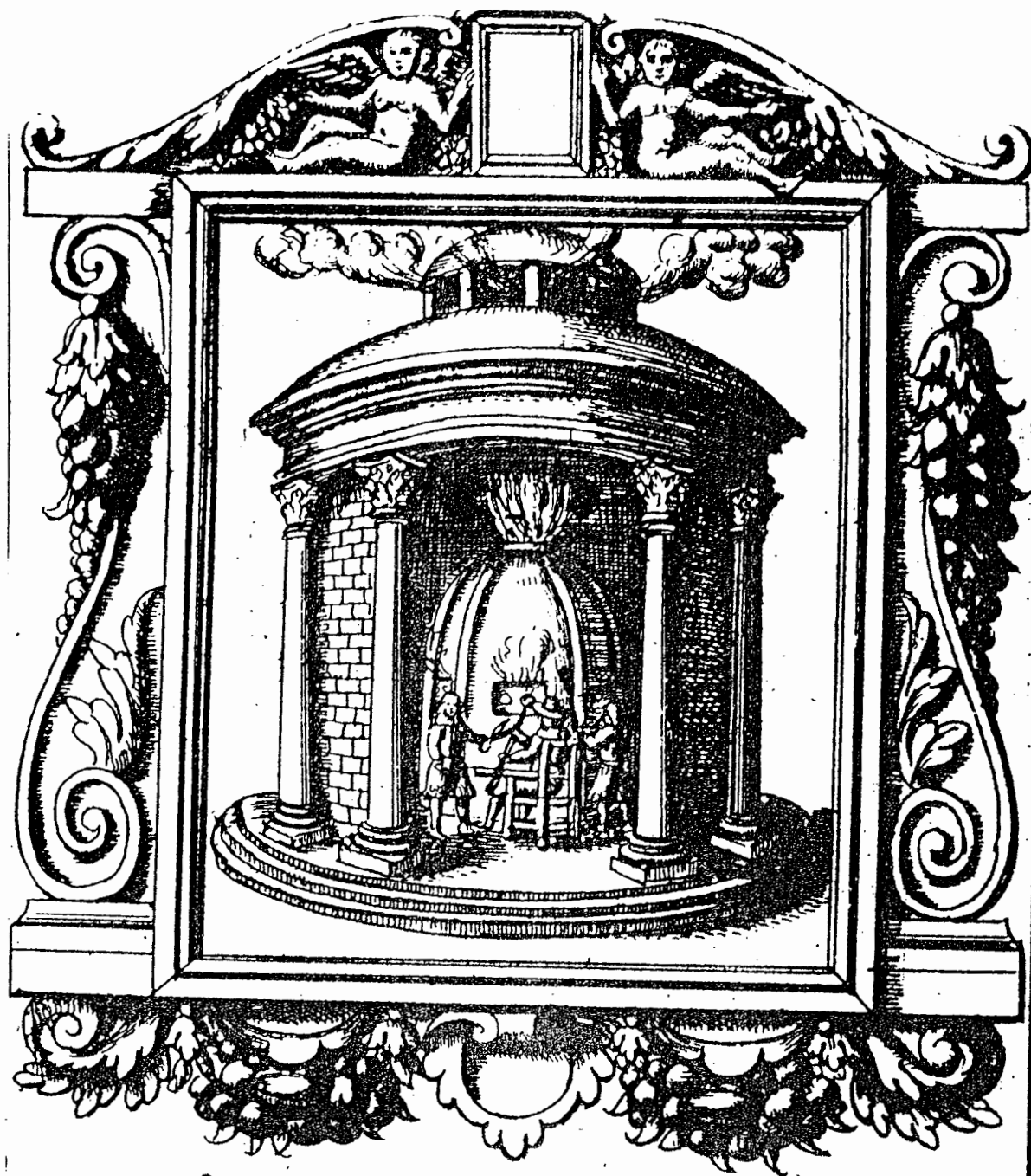
91

101

Banks

71

41



Bought of John Burroughs at the Glasse house without
Ludgate London.

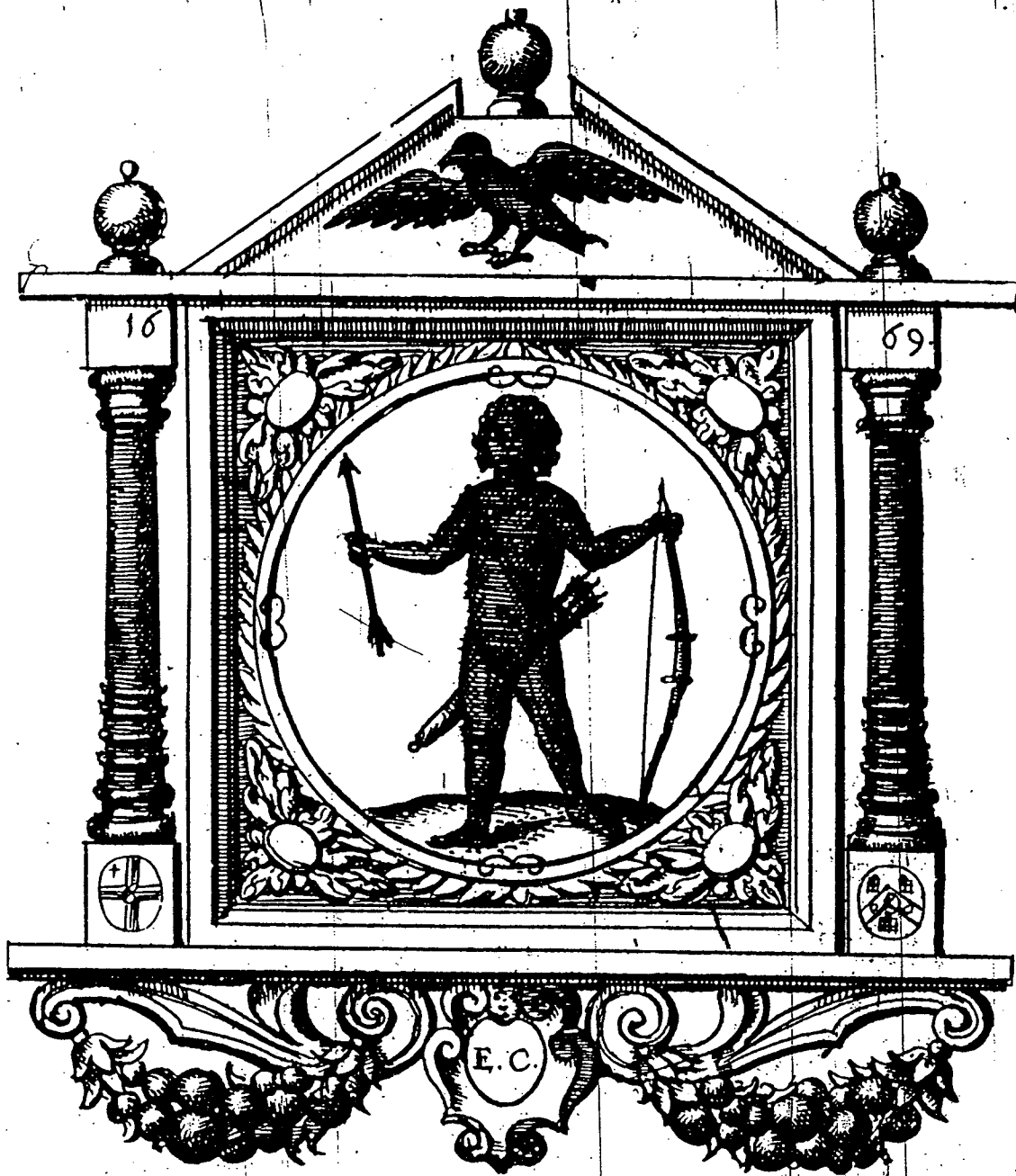


Illustration #2



*Cabinetts, Looking Glasses, Tablets and stannos Secretor
 Chests of Drawers, And Curious inlaid Figures
 for any worke made and Sold By Phillip Hunt
 at y^e Looking Glas & Cabenet at East end of
 S.^t Pauls Church, Y^e.*

Illustration #3



Bought of Ellis Crispe Haberdasher of Small wares
 at the Black-boy in the Old Bayly neare the
 Sessions House.



Henry Linton

Sworn Appraiser

At the Bear & Feather Bed in Moorfields

London

*Buyeth and Selleth all sorts of Household Goods, Viz
 as Standing Beds, Bedding, Chests of Drawers, Tables,
 Chairs, Desks, Desks, and Book Cases, China pictures,
 Counters, Purses, Glasses, Drawers, Sashes, & Sash doors.
 In Apothecaries Shops Appraised Bought & Sold.*

Illustration #5



Illustration #6

S. Nicholls
Engraver
 next door to y^e Crown & Sugarloaf
 in Tower Street LONDON
 Ingraves all Sorts of Pictures viz.
 History, Perspective, Architect, Gard-
 ening & Landskip &c. Maps, Sea-
 Charts, Mathematical Schemes,
 Writing, Flourish'd-peices, Shop-bills,
 Tobacco-marks &c.
 He also Cutt^r on Wood or Mettal for Book-printers
 or Book-sellers, Seals, Stamps, & Plate.

NB. At the same
 Place Survey of Gent.
 Estates are Drawn fair &
 Coloured, like with Groundplots
 and Uprights for Builders or Others.

Illustration #7



Illustration #8



Illustration #9



Illustration #10



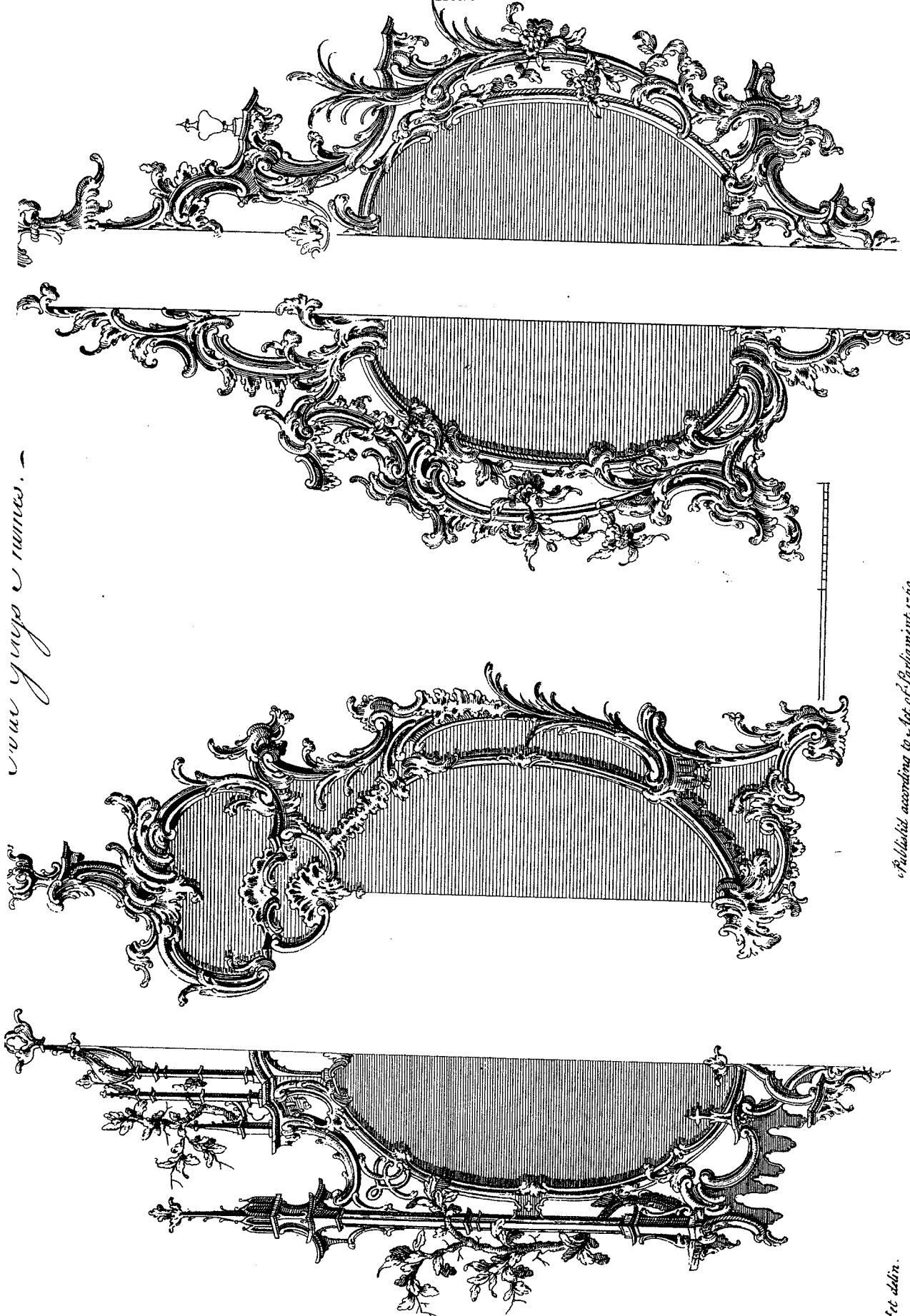
Clark and Pine,
Engravers.

In Castle yard in Holborn near
Chancery Lane
LONDON.

N.B. All manner of Engraving as History, Heads, Writing, Seals, & Plate.

March the 15th Anno Domini 1727

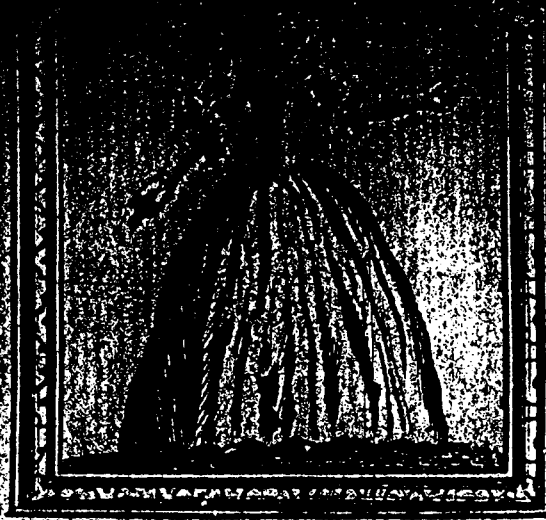
Illustration 12



www.gutenberg.org

Published according to Act of Parliament 1700.

Ed. inv. et. edit.



Jos. Pitcher
 COLOUR MAN,
at the Sign of the Good Woman,
near St. Giles's Church,
 LONDON:
Sells all Sorts of Oils & Colours,
Wholesale & Retail at the lowest Prices.

Illustration #13



Rob^t Jefferson

Shoe Maker

AT THE CRISPIN,

in Cranborn Alley Leicester Fields,

Sondor.

Boots and Shoes for Exportation

at Reasonable Rates.

What actually
- does
- exportation mean?



Robert Clee
Engraver
At the Golden Key
I N N
Pantom Street
N E A R
Leicester-Fields
London

Illustration #15

Clarke in full
for china for my son



Edward Clarke

At the Crown & Canister,
Opposite the London Punch House, on
LUDGATE HILL.

Sells all sorts of Fine Teas,
China & Glass Cut & Flower'd, as well as Plain.

Likewise India Fans, & Lacquer'd Ware, &c. &c.

Wholesale & Retail, at y^e Lowest Prices.

L. Baker sculp.



Great variety of new Flowers & new Prints for Japanning.

This is a reprint
 A copy of the original is mounted beneath this. 1755 P.T.O.

Illustration #17



*Chinoiserie
 Rococo
 Gothick*

Illustration #18

*He's covered
 all the
 cases, and the
 appropriate
 coffin furniture used.*



Illustration #19

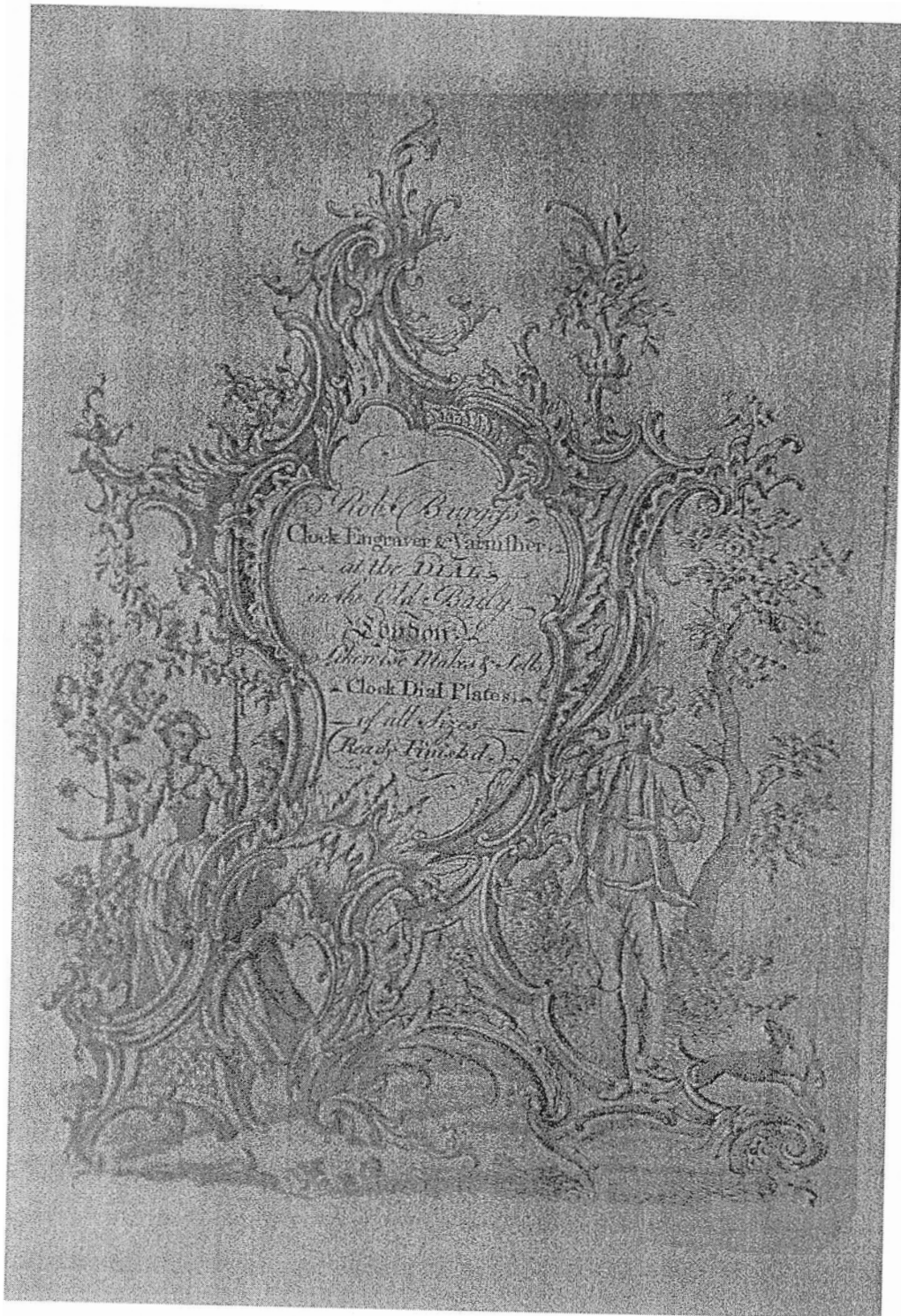


Illustration #20

William Lock
TOY MAKER

*at the sign of the Orange Tree the corner of Cranborn &
Alley, in little Newport Street near Leicester Fields London.*

*Sells all sorts of English & Dutch Toys, with all sorts of Naked and
Drest Babies, all sorts of Combs, & Comb Brushes, Tooth Jewellers
& Plate Brushes, fine pin Cushion, boxes & huffs, Silk Purses of
all sorts, & Silk Garters, watch & Cane strings, all sorts of Necklaces &
Ear Rings, Snuff Boxes, pocket Books, & pocket Glasses, Watch Cases,
all sorts of Horn Buttons, & Buckles, Ivory fish, & other sorts, Counters,
of all sorts Cruet frames, Coffee Mills, Backgammon Tables, Draught
Boards, Men, & Dice all sorts of powder horns, Drinking horns,
Drenching horns, & Shooing horns, Drums, Battledores, and
Buckets, powder Boxes, & Powder Puffs of all sorts, Fine
Powder & Common Powder, & all sorts of Perfumery
Goods at the Lowest Prices.*

Darby Engraver

Illustration #21



Illustration #22



Illustration #23

John Luffe,
 Successor to M^{rs} ELIZ. HUTT,
at the Blue Curtain in
S^t. PAULS - CHURCH - YARD
London.
Makes and Sells all sorts of Beds and Bedding,
Mohair, Silk, worsted, and mixed Damasks,
 And all Kind of Upholder's Goods
Great Choice of English, French & Turkey Carpets,
 Screens of every kind.
Rich Carved Sconces, Tables & Picture Frames,
Brass Lanthorns and Arms, with
All manner of Glazs, Cabinet & Chair Works
at Reasonable Rates.
N. B. Goods Appraised and
 Funerals Performed.

A Design for a Cornice, for a Venetian Window

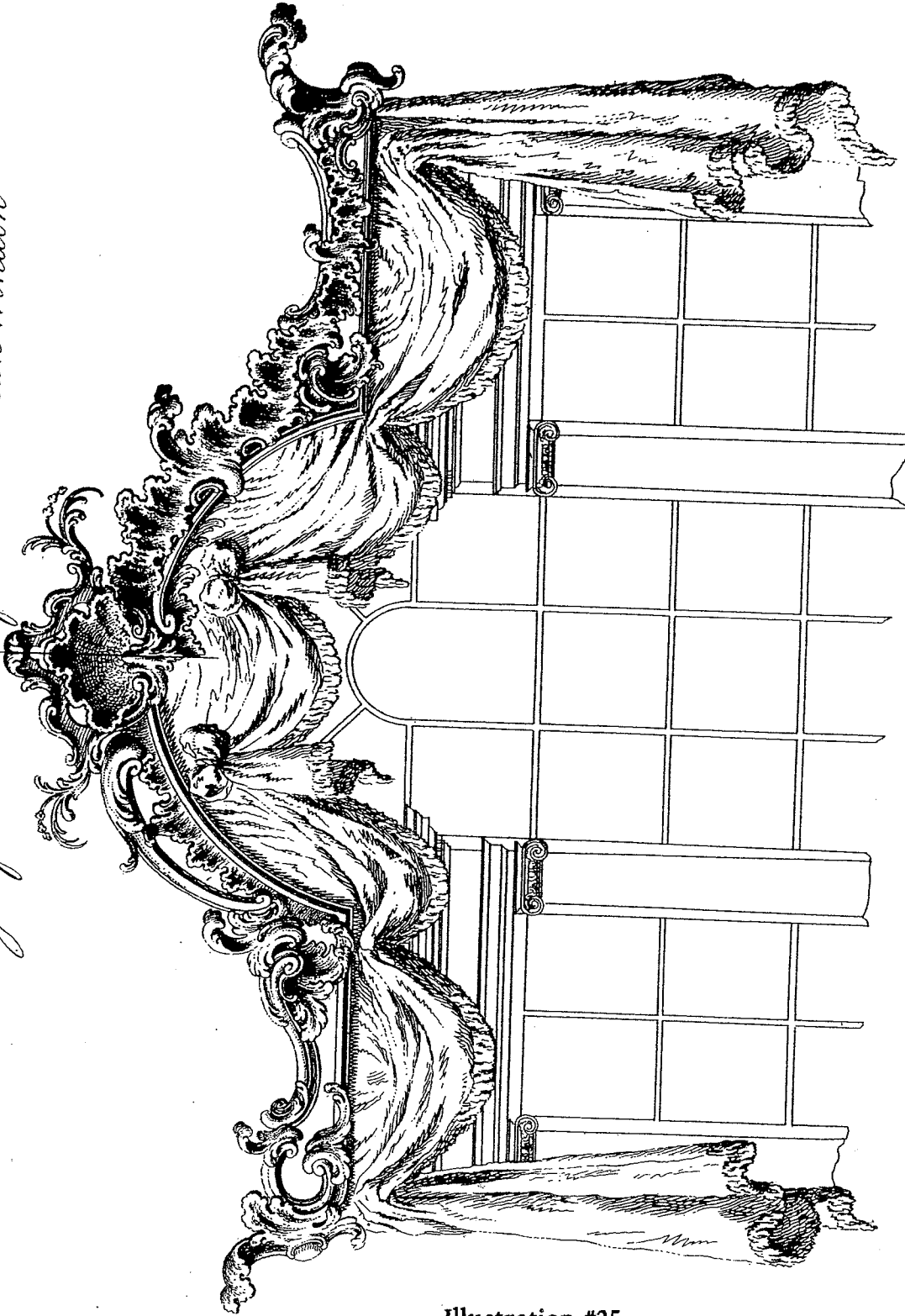


Illustration #25

rendute int. et del.

Published according to the Act. 1762.

J. Taylor sculp.

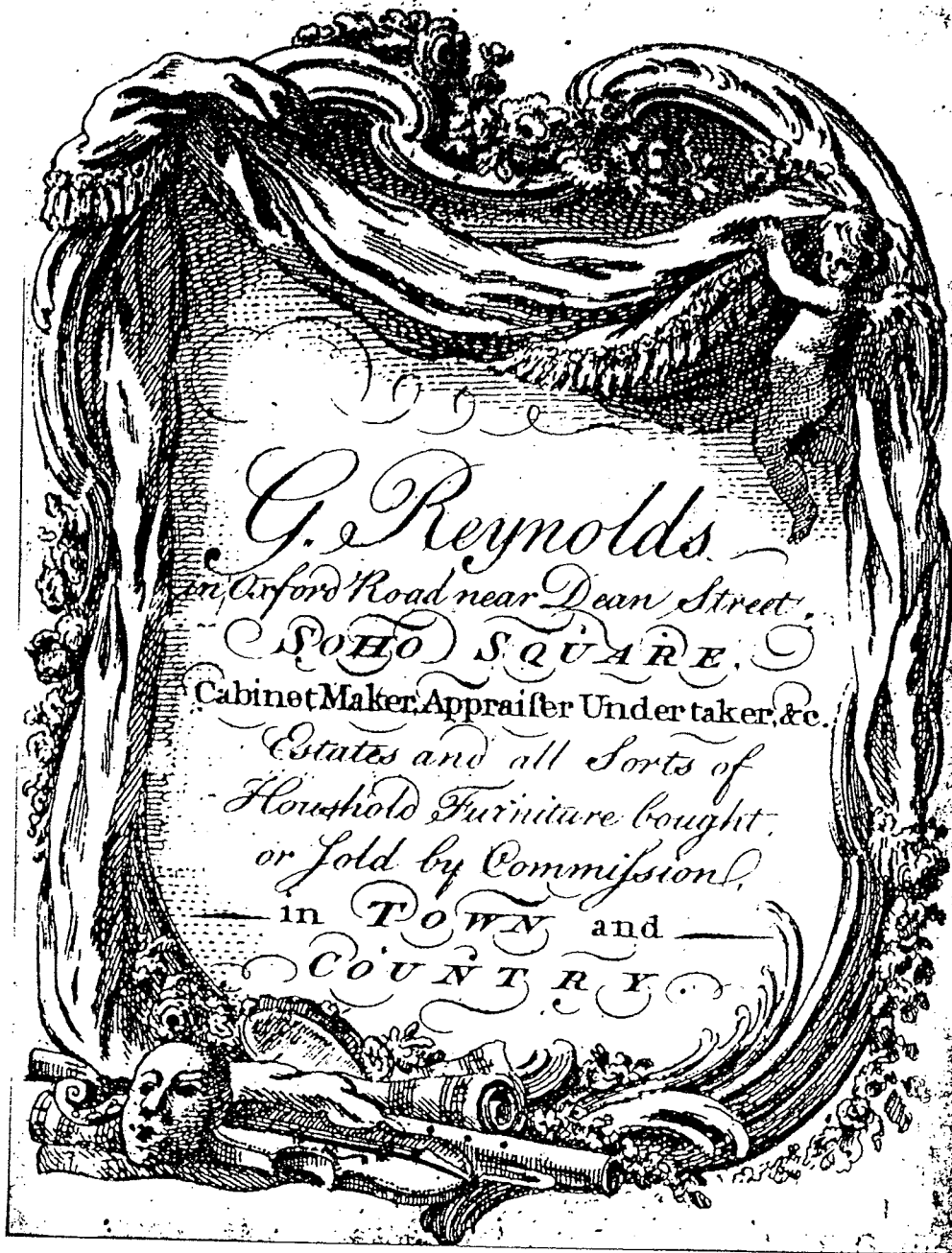


Illustration #26

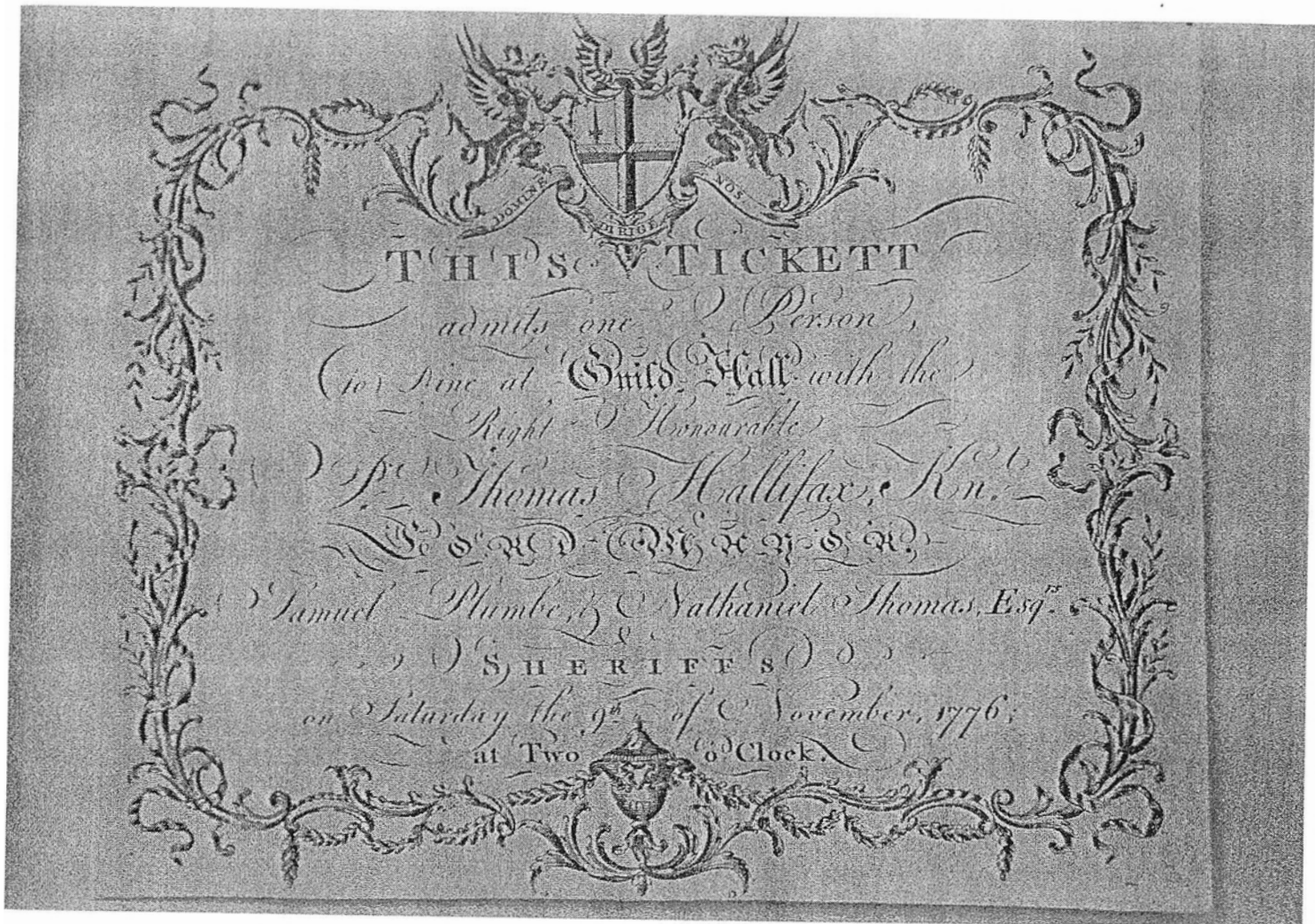


Illustration #27

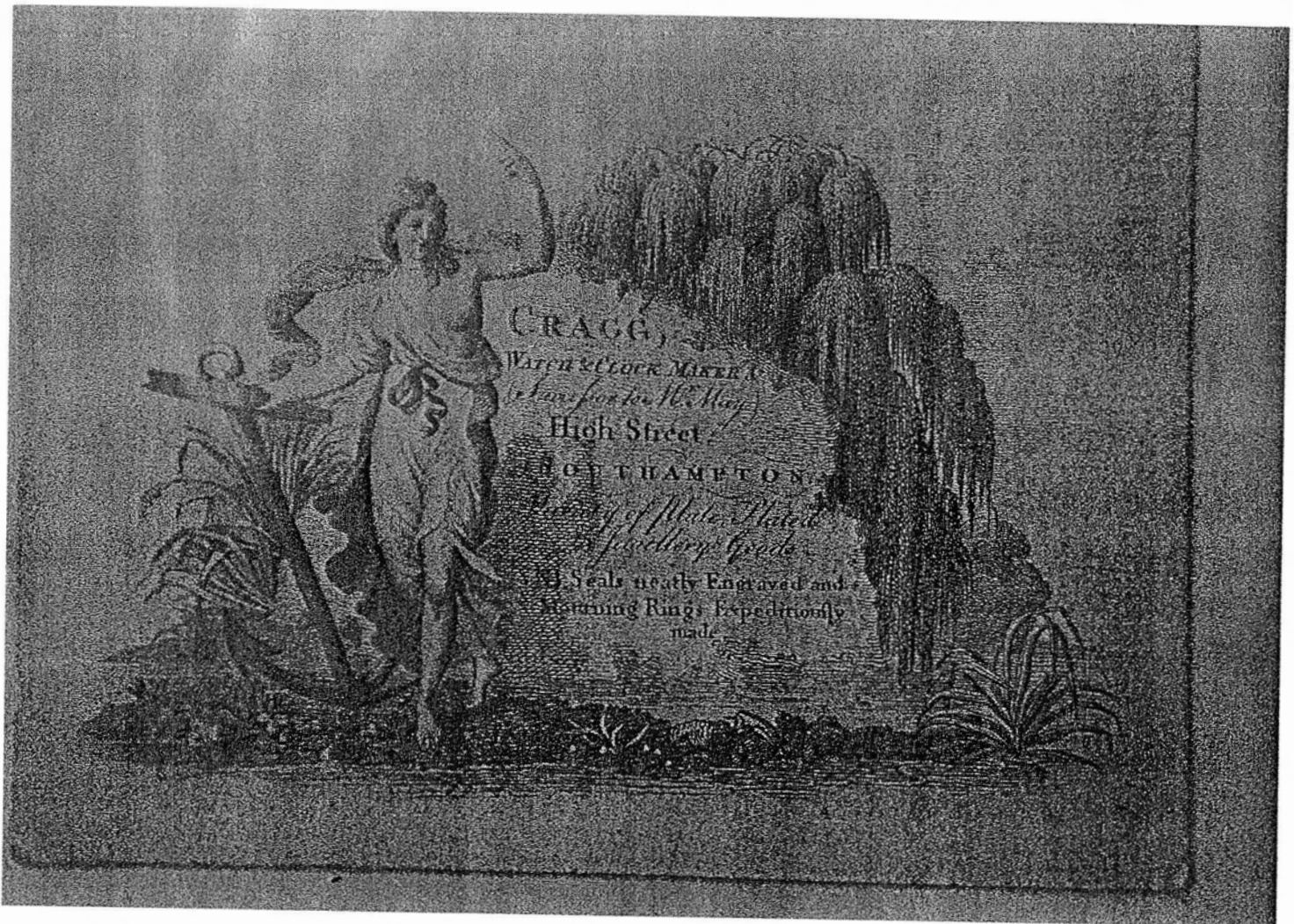


Illustration #28
In the collection of the Guildhall Library;
on heavy card, 4 1/4" x 3"



Illustration #29

- Frontispiece William Guest, Asses Milk Seller. Dated on reverse 1757.
8" x 11" on heavy paper.
Museum of London.
- Illustration #1 John Burroughs, Glass maker. Pre-1703.
6" x 4 3/4"
Pepys Collection, Pepys Library, Magdalen College, Cambridge
(this copy from)British Museum, Heal Collection, 66.14
- Illustration #2 Mn. Grenier, Surgeon's Instruments. Active 1698-1711.
Trade card dated A1 1698 in engraving.
Note on reverse says he moved in 1711.
Engraver/designer H. Mcutti (spelling doubtful)
British Museum, Heal Collection, 52.53
- Illustration #3 Philip Hunt, Cabinet Maker. Active 1680-1720.
Card dated by Beard and Gilbert¹ 1690.
British Museum, Heal Collection 28.105
- Illustration #4 Ellis Crispe, Haberdashers. 1669-1696.
6" x 4 1/2"
Pepys Collection, Pepys Library, Magdalen College, Cambridge
- Illustration #5 Henry Peirson. Sworn Appraiser. 1715-49.
Used as a shop bill in 1749.
6 1/4" x 8 1/4"
Guildhall Library Collection, London, #10302C16 - 1030010
- Illustration #6 Ticket: Lord Mayor's Day, October 30, 1727.
Collection of the Guildhall, Library, London.

¹ All references to Beard and Gilbert from The Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660-1840
(Leeds: Maney and Son Ltd., and the Furniture History Society, 1986.)

- Illustration #7 S. (Sutton?) Nicholls, Engraver. Active 1695-40.
British Museum, Heal Collection 59.113
- Illustration #8 Ellis Gamble, Goldsmith. Active 1714-1733
Designed by Wm. Hogarth; engraved and printed by
A.M. Ireland 6" x 7 3/4" on heavy paper.
Guildhall Library, London; British Museum, Heal Collection.
- Illustration #9. John Deacon, Leather-Seller.
2 1/3" x 4 3/4"
Victoria and Albert Museum 18856.7
- Illustration #10 Jon. Jennings, Asses Milk Seller. Dated on reverse 1733; later
copies are dated 1736 and 1743.
Heal Collection 4.10
- Illustration #11 Clark and Pine, Engravers. Dated in engraving March 15,
1717. British Museum, Heal Collection 59.38
- Illustration #12 Oval Glass Frames, Plate No. CLXVIII. Dated in engraving
1760. Thomas Chippendale, The Gentleman and Cabinet-
Maker's Director. M. Darly sculp.
- Illustration #13 Jos. Pitcher, Colour Man. Dated in engraving, 1764.
Directories give him at this address 1768-77.
British Museum, Heal Collection.
- Illustration #14. Robt. Jefferson, Shoe Maker. c. 1753
M. Darly fecit.
British Museum, Heal Collection 18.76.

- Illustration #15 Robert Clee, Engraver. c. 1763, listed in Universal Director.
- Illustration #16 Edward Clarke. Tea and China Seller. Active 1767-90.
Museum of London Example dated on reverse 11 Apr. 1760.
S. Baker Sculp.
British Museum, Heal Collection 37.16.
- Illustration #17 (John) Ryall and (Robert)Withy. Booksellers and Printsellers.
c. 1755.
British Museum, Heal Collection 17.135.
- Illustration #18 John Oliver, Coffin Plate Chaser. Active c. 1779.
I Rousset (spelling problematic) invt. M. Darly sculp. Chandos
Street
Listed in Rococo: Art and Design in Hogarth's England as c.
1755; Kent's Directory puts him at this address in 1783.
British Museum, Heal Collection 124.56
- Illustration #19 Benjamin Rackstrow. Cabinet and Picture-frame Maker.
Active 1720-38 at this address. Another card in the Heal
Collection puts his address at Sr Isaac Newtons Head, and this
example is dated in the engraving 1738, by H. Copland.
Beard and Gilbert date 1720 to his death in 1772, though they
note that there may have been two Rackstrows, father and son,
with the same Christian name.
British Museum, Heal Collection, 28.186.
- Illustration #20 Robert Burgess. Watch and Clock Engraver and Varnisher.
Active 1782-84.
Ford sculp., Temple Bar.
British Museum, Heal Collection 39.15
- Illustration #21 William Lock, Toy Maker. Active c. 1754-64 (based on
engraver) M. Darly fecit.
Museum of London NN22294

- Illustration #22 William Darby. Active 1750-70 (Beard and Gilbert)
Gentleman's Magazine lists him as bankrupt in 1769.
Admitted as a freeman of the Upholders Co., 1 Oct. 1761.
British Museum, Heal Collection 28.56
- Illustration #23 William Devis. Watchmaker and Goldsmith. Active 1750-65.
British Museum, Heal Collection 39.25
- Illustration #24 John Iliffe, Upholderer. Active 1753-68 (Beard and Gilbert);
1760-65 (Heal)
British Museum, Heal Collection
- Illustration #25. A Design for a Cornice for a Venetian Window. Plate XXXV.
Dated in engraving 1760. Thomas Chippendale, The
Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director. Chippendale invt. et
del. J. Taylor sculp.
- Illustration #26 G. Reynolds, Cabinet Maker. Active c. 1754
Subscribed to Chippendale's 1754 ed. of The Director.
Victoria and Albert Museum 15788.28
British Museum, Heal Collection 28.190
- Illustration #27 Ticket. Guildhall for the Lord Mayor's Dinner 9th Nov. 1776.
Guildhall Library, London
- Illustration #28 Cragg. Watch and Clock Maker
4 1/4" x 3" on heavy card.
Guildhall Library, London.
- Illustration #29 V. Grellier. Stationer. No date.
Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection.